

# CHRIST IS SUPERIOR TO THE PROPHETS

## HEBREWS 01:01–03

### ***DIVISION OVERVIEW: Hebrews 01:01–04:13***

Man has always felt an inner drive to live forever in a perfect world. Therefore, he has sensed an inner need to search and find out if there is a God, and if there is, to please Him and to gain His approval and acceptance. This is where so much religion has come from, from the inner struggle of men to find God.

The great tragedy is this: men have groped and grasped after God as though they were in a dark world that gave no evidence of God. But this is just not so; there is no need for man to be in the dark about God. Why? Because God has revealed Himself, and He has revealed Himself in many different ways:

- => through nature or what might be called a revelation of His Supreme deity and power. A person can look at nature and clearly see God's deity and power.
- => through conscience or what might be called an inner witness or sense of duty to God.
- => through law or what might be called a revelation of Supreme justice.
- => through religion or what might be called a revelation of how to worship and become acceptable to God.
- => through prophets and priests or what might be called the revelation of God through human spokesmen and mediators.

The list could go on and on, but the point is that God has revealed Himself to man, and each revelation has been very important for man's understanding of God. But despite all these revelations, something vital is still missing. If man is ever to know God, there is only one way, the very same way that man gets to know anybody. Man can know *about a person*, know all the facts about a person's life; but until he personally meets the person and associates and fellowships with him, he does not personally know him. Therefore if man was to ever know God, God had to reveal Himself in the most supreme way possible: He had to come to earth and show Himself to man, revealing exactly who He is and what He is like. This is the whole point of these four chapters. In fact, it is the point of the whole Book of Hebrews: the Supreme revelation of God is Jesus Christ, God's very own Son. God has revealed Himself in the most glorious way possible: He has sent His very own Son into the world.

### ***Introduction: Hebrews 01:01–03***

Men have usually looked upon the prophets of religion as great men of God. They have seen the prophets of God...

- as very special servants of God.
  - as men who had a special message from God.
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- as men who could tell others how to become acceptable to God.
- as men who could tell others how to live and please God.

This was a true concept, just so the prophet was one of the chosen prophets of the Old Testament. The prophets of the Old Testament were great men of God. They were men to whom God spoke and to whom God entrusted His message. But as great as the prophets of the Old Testament were, they fade into insignificance when compared to Jesus Christ, God's very own Son. Jesus Christ is far, far Superior to the prophets.

- I. Jesus Christ is the supreme spokesman of God (vv. 1-2).
- II. Jesus Christ is the appointed heir of all things (v. 2).
- III. Jesus Christ is the Creator and Maker of the universe (v. 2).
- IV. Jesus Christ is the very glory of God Himself (v. 3).
- V. Jesus Christ is the exact representation of God (v. 3).
- VI. Jesus Christ is the Sustainer of the universe (v. 3).
- VII. Jesus Christ is the Redeemer of mankind (v. 3).
- VIII. Jesus Christ is the supreme Mediator (v. 3).

### ***I. Hebrews 01:01–02 The Supreme Revelation of God***

Jesus Christ is the supreme spokesman of God. This is the first reason why He is superior to the prophets. Note the glorious truth: God has spoken to man. He is not as most people think, far off in the distance, someplace in outer space, so far away that He is unconcerned with what is happening to man and his world. The very opposite is true: God is concerned with our lives, with the trials and trouble, sin and evil, suffering and disease, death and decay — with all that happens to us. Therefore, God has spoken to us; He has given us the wonderful words of life and of deliverance. He has told us exactly how to conquer the trials, temptations, corruption and death of this world. When did God speak to man, and where can we find the record of God's Word? If God is really not far off in the distance someplace — if God has really spoken to man, then we must find His Word and heed it. For His Word would mean everlasting life and victory over all the evil, trials, corruption and death of this life. Where is God's Word? It is found in two places.

1. First, God's Word is found in the prophets. In ancient times God spoke to man by His prophets, that is, by persons whom He had chosen to proclaim His Word to the world. Who are these persons? They are the men and women of the Old Testament Scriptures. But note a significant fact: God spoke through the prophets...
  - “in the past”: that is, in many parts (polumeros); in many separate revelations, at many different times.
  - in various ways (polutropos).

What does this mean? No man could possibly receive and understand or explain the whole revelation of God. God and the truth of God is too big for any one man. Therefore, God had to make many revelations to many different people, and He had to use many different ways to speak to men. No man could ever contain or share the whole revelation of God.

Mathew Henry states it well by saying that there had to be a *gradual opening* of man's mind concerning the Messiah, the Saviour of the world. (*Mathew Henry's Commentary*, Vol. 6. Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, p. 888.)

- => God spoke to Adam and told him that the Saviour would come from the offspring of the woman (Gen. 3:15).
  - => God spoke to Abraham and told him that the Saviour would come from his offspring (Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 22:18).
  - => God spoke to Jacob and told him that the Saviour would come through the tribe of Judah (Gen. 49:10).
  - => God spoke to David and told him that the Saviour would be born of his house (2 Sam 7:13).
  - => God spoke to Micah and told him that the Saviour would be born at Bethlehem (Mic. 5:2).
  - => God spoke to Isaiah and told him that the Saviour would be born of a virgin (Isa. 7:14).
- Note also the different ways in which God spoke to the prophets:
- => He spoke to Moses in a great thundering sound in the midst of a storm (Exo. 19:19; Dut. 5:22).
  - => He spoke to Elijah by a gentle whisper (1 Kng. 19:12).
  - => He spoke to Isaiah in a vision (Isa. 1:1).
  - => He spoke to Samuel in a dream (1 Sam. 3:5).

On and on the list could go, for God spoke to his prophets in many different ways. But the point to see is this: each prophet could present only a part of God's revelation. No one of them could present the whole revelation of God. The full revelation of God is not found in the prophets. Where is it found then? This brings us to the second point.

2. Second, God's Word, His full revelation, is found in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. "In these last days he [God has] spoken to us by His Son." This is the most astounding truth imaginable! For God could send no greater messenger with His Word than to send His very own Son. And this is the astounding declaration of this passage: God has sent His Son to proclaim His Word to men.

Before Christ, no man could fully grasp or understand God, and no man could fully proclaim the Word of God. Men could understand only a part or fragment of God. But now God's very own Son has come to earth and revealed God, proclaiming all that God is. And note: it is He Himself who is the revelation of God. He embodies

the Word of God. In fact, He is the Word of God. Everything that God ever wanted to say to man is said in the person of Jesus Christ. He is the perfect expression of God's mind. Everything that man needs to know about God and the conquest of life with all its trials, corruption and death is seen in Jesus Christ. (See *The Word*, Jn. 1:1-5.)

**Thought 1.** This means several wonderful things.

- 1) God loves man. He has not left man in the dark, groping and grasping and trying to find the truth of life and death and the hereafter. God has spoken to man and revealed the truth about...
  - where we have come from.
  - why we are here.
  - where we are going.
  - how we can conquer the trials, evil and death of this life and world.
- 2) If we want to know the truth about God and ourselves, we have to look to God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He and He alone is the full revelation of God.
- 3) Jesus Christ is superior to all the prophets; He alone is the supreme revelation of God. As great as the Old Testament prophets were, they were not above God's Son. The Lord Jesus Christ is above the prophets; He is the supreme — the full and final — spokesman for God. There can be no greater spokesman than that of God's own Son.

## II. *Hebrews 01:02 Jesus Christ, the Heir of All Things*

Jesus Christ is appointed the heir of all things. This is the second reason why He is superior to the prophets. What is meant by heir? It means that Jesus Christ is to receive and be "the lawful Owner of all things" (Amplified New Testament). Jesus Christ alone has inherited all that God is and has. No man is great enough or worthy enough to be the heir of God; only Christ is. He alone has *lived and walked perfectly* before God. Among men, He alone has obeyed God perfectly, therefore, He alone has inherited all that God is and has; He alone has been appointed to be the Owner of all things. What is it that Jesus Christ is to inherit and receive?

=> Jesus Christ is to inherit all power in heaven and earth.

**Mat 28:18** *Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."*

=> Jesus Christ has inherited the authority to execute all judgment upon men.

**John 5:22** *"Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son."*

=> Jesus Christ is going to inherit the Lordship over both the dead and the living.

**Rom 14:9** *For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.*

⇒ Jesus Christ is going to inherit the whole universe: a new heavens and earth and a new world capital.

**2 Pet 3:10-13** *But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.*

**Rev 21:1-2, 23-26** *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendour into it. On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. The glory and honour of the nations will be brought into it.*

⇒ Jesus Christ is going to inherit all government — eternal government.

**Isa 9:6-7** *For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.*

**Heb 1:8** *But about the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the sceptre of your kingdom."*

⇒ Jesus Christ is going to inherit all power and wealth, wisdom and strength, honour and glory and praise.

**Rev 5:12** *In a loud voice they sang: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and praise!"*

**1 Pet 3:22** *Who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand — with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.*

⇒ Jesus Christ is going to inherit a name above every name and every knee shall be bowed before Him vindicating His claim to be both Lord and Saviour.

**Phil 2:9-10** *Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth.*

### III. **Hebrews 01:02 Jesus Christ, Creator of the Universe**

Jesus Christ is the Creator and Maker of the worlds or universe. This is the third reason why Jesus Christ is superior to the prophets. The word “universe” (aiones) can also be translated as ages. Jesus Christ is the creator of both the universe and the ages that roll in one upon another, creator of both the worlds and time as it moves forward from event to event, and generation to generation. The Amplified New Testament states it well:

**Heb 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 he made the universe.*

**Col 1:16** *For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.*

The point is this: Christ’s creation includes all the universes of all dimensions of being, wherever they are and however many there may be. This is exactly what is meant by the “universe.” It is also what is meant when Colossians says that Christ created all things “things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities.” (Col. 1:16)

⇒ If there are other *visible planets and living beings* in outer space, Christ created them.

⇒ If there are *invisible worlds and beings* in other dimensions, Christ created them.

It does not matter what kind of world or creatures they may be — thrones, powers, rulers or authorities — Christ created them all. There is nothing in existence that He has not created.

- no planet
- no vegetation
- no star
- no mineral
- no creature
- no element
- no dimension
- no thing

**John 1:3** *Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.*

**1 Cor 8:6** *Yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.*

**Eph 3:9** *And to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.*

**Col 1:16** *For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.*



#### **IV. Hebrews 01:03 Jesus Christ, the Glory of God**

Jesus Christ possesses the very glory of God. This is the fourth reason why Jesus Christ is superior to the prophets. Note the phrase “The Son is” (on). It means “absolute and timeless existence” (A.T. Robertson. *Word Pictures In The New Testament*, Vol. 5. Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1932, p. 335). This means that Jesus Christ Himself possessed the glory of God before He ever came into the world. He has always existed in the glory of God; He is eternal.

What does glory mean? It means all the brightness of God — all the brilliance, radiance, splendour and light of God’s Being. It means that God’s very presence — in all of His light and purity — dwells among us in the person of Jesus Christ. It meant that in Christ “all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form” (Col. 2:9). Men could look at Jesus Christ and see the glory of God in Him — the very light and radiance of God’s Being.

*John 1:14* The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

*John 17:5* “And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.”

*John 17:24* “Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.”

**Thought 1.** Many commentators point out that the sun is a good illustration. Just as the glory of the sun’s light reaches down to earth and touches the lives of men, so Jesus Christ, who is the glory of God, reaches down and touches the lives of men.

#### **V. Hebrews 01:03 Jesus Christ, the Representation of God**

Jesus Christ is the exact representation of God. This is the fifth reason why Jesus Christ is superior to the prophets.

=> The word “exact” (charakter) means the very stamp, mark and impression — the very reproduction of God. Jesus Christ is “the perfect imprint and very image of [God’s] nature.”

=> The word “representation” (hypostasis) means substance. Jesus Christ is the very substance, the very Being, Person and embodiment of God.

*John 10: 30* “I and the Father are one.”

*John 14:9-10* Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.”

**2 Cor 4:4** *The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

**Phil 2:6** *Who [Christ], being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped.*

**Heb 1:3** *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 the Majesty in heaven.*

## **VI. Hebrews 01:03 Jesus Christ, Sustainer of the Universe**

Jesus Christ is the Sustainer of the universe. This is the sixth reason why He is superior to the prophets. No man holds the universe together, but Christ does. God has not created the world and left it to fly through space to take whatever course it will. God is not going to let the world destroy itself. God is in control. His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, is controlling the world and moving it forward to a climactic moment of renewal and recreation — what the Bible calls the *great day of redemption*. And note how He is sustaining it and holding it together: by His powerful Word. He simply speaks and the laws that sustain the world are set in motion (cp. the law of gravity. See note, Col. 1:16-17.) The Word of Jesus Christ is...

- perfect and pure energy
- perfect and pure power
- perfect and pure unity
- perfect and pure cohesion
- perfect and pure force
- perfect and pure order
- perfect and pure solidarity

It is His Word that sustains and upholds everything together. It is his love and power...

- that keeps the universe from flying apart and disintegrating.
- that keeps evil from completely conquering and utterly destroying all things.

**Col 1:17** *He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.*

**Heb 1:3** *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 the Majesty in heaven.*

## **VII. Hebrews 01:03 Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of Mankind**

Jesus Christ is the Redeemer of mankind. This is the seventh reason why He is superior to the prophets. Redemption has not come from some great prophet who has made purification for our sins. Christ and Christ alone could sacrifice Himself for our sins. How could He do this? In fact, how could any man do this? No man can; this is the point of this passage. Only a perfect Person could ever purify and cleanse men from their sins. This



is the reason Jesus Christ had to come to earth and live a perfect life. He had to secure perfect righteousness for man and die as the perfect substitute for man. By so doing, He stands for all men...

- His perfect righteousness stands for all men.
- His sacrificial death stands for all men.

When a man believes in Jesus Christ, truly believes, the righteousness and death of Jesus Christ cover him. God takes the man's faith and honours it; He honours it by *counting* the man as being in the righteousness and death of Jesus Christ. The man is righteous in Christ, and he has already died to sin in Christ. Therefore, the man is purified; his sins are cleansed and washed away.

*1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.*

*Rev 1:5 And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the first-born from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood.*

### **VIII. Hebrews 01:03 Jesus Christ, the Supreme Mediator**

Jesus Christ is the supreme Mediator and Intercessor. This is the eighth reason why He is superior to the prophets. He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty in heaven, sitting there as the great Mediator and Intercessor for man. No other person could ever come close to being seated at the right hand of God; no other person could ever be accepted by God as the Mediator and Intercessor for man. Christ and Christ alone can sit at the right hand of God. Note two significant points.

1. Jesus Christ sits at the right hand of God as the exalted Lord and as the Sovereign Majesty of the universe. He is the supreme Being of the universe, the Person who is to be supremely respected, honoured, worshipped and served by all beings in both earth and heaven.

*Eph 4:10 He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.*

*Phil 2:9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name.*

2. Jesus Christ is in the presence of God as our Mediator and Intercessor, as the only Person who has the right to represent man before God. Note: Christ is not exalted to stand as our Prosecutor and Judge; contrariwise, He is before God to represent us, to plead for us, to offer His righteousness and sacrificial death for us. This means a most wonderful thing: someday when we appear before God, if we have trusted Jesus Christ as our Saviour, God will be able to deal with us in love and not judgment.

Because Jesus Christ stands before God as our Mediator, God will accept all those who have trusted Christ to be their Mediator. Remember, however: all those who have rejected Jesus Christ as the Mediator shall face Jesus Christ as the Sovereign Lord and Judge.

**Rom 8:34** *Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died — more than that, who was raised to life — is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.*

**Heb 7:25-26** *Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. Such a high priest meets our need — one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens.*

**Heb 8:1** *The point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven.*

**1 Tim 2:5** *For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*

**Heb 8:6** *But the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, and it is founded on better promises.*

**Heb 9:15** *For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance — now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.*

**Heb 9:24** *For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence.*

**Heb 12:24** *To Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.*

**1 John 2:1** *My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defence — Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. ■*