

Jesus, the Promised Son



Week Three

inTro



Read This Week's Passage:
Hebrews 1

A PROMISED SEED

Right after Adam and Eve sinned, God promised them a “seed,” a Son who would deliver them from the enemy, recover the inheritance that had been lost, and fulfill the purpose for which they had been created (Gen. 3:15). This Son would both represent and redeem them by taking their place and, ultimately, by destroying the serpent.

“When Adam and Eve first heard the promise, they looked for its speedy fulfillment. They joyfully welcomed their first-born son, hoping that he might be the Deliverer. But the fulfillment of the promise tarried.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 31. The promise was later confirmed to Abraham. God swore to him that he would have a “seed,” a Son through whom all the nations of the earth would be blessed (Gen. 22:16–18; Gal. 3:16). And God did the same with David. He promised David that his descendant would be installed by God as His own Son and would be established as a righteous ruler over all the kings of the earth (2 Sam. 7:12–14; Ps. 89:27–29). What neither Adam and Eve, Abraham, or David probably never imagined, however, was that their Redeemer Son would be God Himself.



inScribe

Write out Hebrews 1 from the Bible translation of your choice. If you're pressed for time, write out Hebrews 1:1–4. You may also rewrite the passage in your own words, or outline or mind-map the chapter.

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Go back to your scribed text and study the passage.

Circle repeated words/phrases/ideas

Underline words/phrases that are important and have meaning to you

Draw **arrows** to connect words/phrases to other associated or related words/phrases

What special insights do your marks seem overall to point to?

Memorize your favorite verse in Hebrews 1. Write it out multiple times to help memorization.

How should all the promises God has fulfilled in the past help us to trust Him for the promises in the future?

Why does the truth of “God coming to earth” bring so much hope?



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JESUS OF THESE LAST DAYS

The first paragraph of Hebrews reveals that Paul believed he was living in “the last days.” Scripture employs two expressions about the future that have different meanings. The prophets used the expression “last days” or “latter days” to talk about the future in general (e.g., Deut. 4:30, 31; Jer. 23:20). The prophet Daniel used a second expression, “the time of the end,” to talk more specifically about the last days of earth’s history (Dan. 8:17; 12:4).

Several Old Testament prophets announced that in the “latter days” God would raise up a king who would destroy the enemies of His people (e.g., Num. 24:14–19) and attract the nations to Israel (e.g., Isa. 2:2, 3). Paul says that these promises were fulfilled in Jesus. He defeated Satan and attracted all the nations to Himself (Col. 2:15; John 12:32). In this sense, then, the promised “last days” have begun because Jesus has begun fulfilling God’s promises.

Our spiritual fathers died in faith. They saw and greeted the promises from “afar,” but did not receive them. We, on the other hand, see their fulfillment in Jesus.

The Father promised that He would resurrect His children (1 Thess. 4:15, 16). The wonderful news is that He initiated the resurrection of His children with the resurrection of Jesus (1 Cor. 15:20; Matt. 27:51–53). The Father also promised a new creation (Isa. 65:17). He has begun to fulfill that promise by creating a new spiritual life in us (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15). He promised that He would establish His final kingdom (Dan. 2:44). He inaugurated that kingdom by delivering us from the power of Satan and installing Jesus as our ruler (Matt. 12:28–30; Luke 10:18–20). This is only the beginning, however. What the Father began to do in Jesus’ first coming, He will bring to completion at the second.

Hebrews 1:1–4 is only one sentence in the original Greek, and it has been argued that it is the most beautiful in all the New Testament from the point of view of its rhetorical artistry. Its main assertion is that God has spoken to us in His Son, Jesus.

For the Jews in the first century AD, the word of God had not been heard for a long time. Before John the Baptist, the last revelation to be expressed in the Written Word of God had come through the prophet Malachi and the ministries of Ezra and Nehemiah four centuries before. But now, through John and Jesus, God was speaking to them again.

God’s revelation through Jesus, however, was superior to the revelation that God had made through the prophets, including John, because Jesus is a greater means of revelation. He is God Himself, who created the heaven and the earth and rules the universe. For Paul, the deity of Christ is never in question; it is assumed.

Also, for Paul, the Old Testament was the Word of God. The same God who spoke in the past continues to speak in the present. The Old Testament communicated a true knowledge of God’s will.

However, it was possible to understand the Old Testament’s fuller meaning only when the Son arrived on earth. In the author’s mind, the Father’s revelation in the Son provided the key to understanding the true breadth of the Old Testament, just like the picture on the box of a jigsaw puzzle provides the key to finding the correct place for every one of its pieces. Jesus brought so much of the Old Testament to light.

Meanwhile, Jesus came to be our Representative and our Savior. He would take our place in the fight and defeat the serpent. Similarly, in Hebrews, Jesus is the “pioneer” or “captain” and “forerunner” of believers (Heb. 2:10; 6:20). He fights for us and represents us. This also means that what God did for Jesus, our Representative, the Father also wants to do for us. He who exalted Jesus at His right hand also wants us to sit with Jesus on His throne (Rev. 3:21). God’s message to us in Jesus includes not only what Jesus said but also what the Father did through Him and to Him, all for our temporal and eternal benefit.

THE GLORY OF GOD AND MAKER OF WORLDS

In the Old Testament, the glory of God refers to His visible presence among His people (Exod. 16:7; 24:16, 17; Lev. 9:23; Num. 14:10). This presence is often associated with light or radiance.

Scripture informs us that Jesus is the Light who came to this world to reveal the glory of God (Heb. 1:3; John 1:6–9, 14–18; 2 Cor. 4:6). Think, for instance, of how Jesus appeared in the transfiguration: “And He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light” (Matt. 17:2).

Just as the sun cannot be perceived except by the radiance of its light, God is known through Jesus. From our perspective, the two are one. Because God’s glory is light itself, there is no difference, in actual being, between God and Jesus, just as there is no difference between light and its radiance.

Hebrews also says that Jesus is the “exact representation” of the Father’s substance (Heb. 1:3, NASB). The point of the metaphor is that there is a perfect correspondence in being—or essence—between the Father and the Son. Note that human beings carry God’s image but not His essence (Gen. 1:26). The Son, however, shares the same essence with the Father. No wonder that Jesus said, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father” (John 14:9, NKJV).

Hebrews 1 affirms that God created the world “through” or “by” Jesus and that Jesus sustains the world with His powerful word. Some think that Jesus was the instrument through whom God created. This is not completely accurate. First, for Paul, Jesus is the Lord who created the world; He was not a mere helper. Hebrews 1:10 says that Jesus is the Lord who created the earth and the heavens, and Paul also applies to Him what Psalm 102:25–27 says about the Lord (Yahweh) as Creator. The Father created and Jesus created. There is a perfect agreement between Father and Son in purpose and activity. This is part of the mystery of the Trinity. Jesus created and God created, but there is only One Creator, God—which implies that Jesus is God.

Meanwhile Hebrews 4:13 shows that Jesus is also Judge. His authority to rule and judge derives from the fact that God created all things and sustains the universe (Isa. 44:24–28).

Hebrews 1:3 and Colossians 1:17 affirm that Jesus also sustains the universe. This sustaining action probably includes the idea of guidance or governance. The Greek word *pheron* (“sustaining,” “carrying”) is used to describe the wind driving a boat (Acts 27:15, 17) or God leading the prophets (2 Pet. 1:21). Thus, in a real sense, Jesus not only created us but sustains us as well. Every breath, every heartbeat, every moment of our existence is found in Him, Jesus, the foundation of all created existence.



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After looking at your scribed and annotated text, what special insights do your marks seem to point to overall?



What questions emerge after studying this week’s passage?

What parts are difficult?

What other principles and conclusions do you find?

In your own words, how does Jesus reveal the mystery of the Father?



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What relationship do the following verses have with the primary passage?

Isaiah 2:2, 3

Exodus 24:16, 17

Isaiah 44:24

Luke 1:31, 32

2 Samuel 7:12-14

Psalms 2:7



What other verses/promises come to mind in connection with Hebrews 1?

Review your memorized verse from Hebrews 1.

TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU

Hebrews 1:5 reports the following words of the Father to Jesus: “You are My Son, today I have begotten You.” (NKJV). What does it mean that Jesus was “begotten,” and when did this happen? Doesn’t this show that Jesus was somehow created by God sometime in the past, as many believe?

Jesus was begotten in the sense that He was appointed by God as the *promised ruler*, the son of David.

God promised to David that his Son would be the true legitimate ruler of the nations. Through Him God would defeat His enemies and give Him the nations as His inheritance (Pss. 89:27; Ps. 2:7, 8).

As we read in Romans 1:3, 4 and Acts 13:32, 33, Jesus was publicly revealed as God’s Son. Jesus’ baptism and transfiguration were moments when God identified and announced Jesus as His Son (Matt. 3:17; 17:5).

Yet, according to the New Testament, Jesus became the “Son of God with power” (Rom. 1:4) when He was resurrected and seated at the right hand of God. It was at that moment that God’s promise to David that his son would rule over the nations as eternally guaranteed (2 Sam. 7:12–14).

Thus, Caesar (symbol of Rome) was not the legitimate “son of god,” ruler of the nations. Instead, Jesus Christ was. The “begetting” of Jesus refers to His victorious incarnation and consequent appointment of ruler over the nations, and not to the beginning of His existence, because Jesus had always existed. There was never a time when Jesus did not exist, because He is God.

In fact, Hebrews 7:3 says that Jesus does not have “beginning of days nor end of life” (cf. Heb. 13:8) because He is eternal. Thus, the idea of Jesus as God’s “only begotten son” is not dealing with the nature of Christ as deity but with His role in the plan of salvation, as Christ fulfilled all the covenant promises.

The coming of Jesus to this earth as the Son of God fulfilled several functions at the same time. In the first place, as the Divine Son of God, Jesus came to reveal the Father to us. Through His actions and words, Jesus showed us what the Father really is like and why we can trust and obey Him.

Jesus also came as the promised Son of David, Abraham, and Adam, through whom God had promised He would defeat the enemy and rule the world. Thus, Jesus came to take the place of Adam at the head of humanity and fulfill the original purpose God had for people (Gen. 1:26–28; Ps. 8:3–8). Jesus came to be the righteous ruler God always wanted this world to have.



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Where do you see Jesus in Hebrews 1?



What is Jesus saying to you through the main text?

What connects you to the Begotten Son?

Prayer: How do you respond to seeing Jesus in this way?



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Jesus, the Promised Son



Review the memory verse.
How does it apply to your
life this week?

—————→
After this week’s study of the
passage, what are you impressed
with most personally?

What are some impressions
that can be applied socially and
practically?



Read more inSight from the
Spirit of Prophecy at
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CHILDREN IN CHRIST

“The highest angel in heaven had not the power to pay the ransom for one lost soul. Cherubim and seraphim have only the glory with which they are endowed by the Creator as his creatures, and the reconciliation of man to God could be accomplished only through a mediator who was equal with God, possessed of attributes that would dignify, and declare him worthy to treat with the Infinite God in man’s behalf, and also represent God to a fallen world. Man’s substitute and surety must have man’s nature, a connection with the human family whom he was to represent, and, as God’s ambassador, he must partake of the divine nature, have a connection with the Infinite, in order to manifest God to the world, and be a mediator between God and man.

“These qualifications were found alone in Christ. Clothing his divinity with humanity, he came to earth to be called the Son of man and the Son to God. He was the surety for man, the ambassador for God,—the surety for man to satisfy by his righteousness in man’s behalf the demands of the law, and the representative of God to make manifest his character to a fallen race.

“The world’s Redeemer possessed the power to draw men to himself, to quiet their fears, to dispel their gloom, to inspire them with hope and courage, to enable them to believe in the willingness of God to receive them through the merits of the divine Substitute. As subjects of the love of God we ever should be grateful that we have a mediator, an advocate, an intercessor in the heavenly courts, who pleads in our behalf before the Father.

“We have everything we could ask to inspire us with faith and trust in God. In earthly courts, when a king would make his greatest pledge to assure men of his truth, he gives his child as a hostage, to be redeemed on the fulfillment of his promise; and behold what a pledge of the Father’s faithfulness; for when he would assure men of the immutability of his council, he gave his only begotten Son to come to earth, to take the nature of man, not only for the brief years of life, but to retain his nature in the heavenly courts, an everlasting pledge of the faithfulness of God. O, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and love of God! ‘Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.’ ” (Ellen G. White, *The Review and Herald*, December 22, 1891.)

“The word that was spoken to Jesus at the Jordan, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,’ embraces humanity. God spoke to Jesus as our representative. With all our sins and weaknesses, we are not cast aside as worthless. ‘He hath made us accepted in the Beloved.’ Ephesians 1:6. The glory that rested upon Christ is a pledge of the love of God for us. . . . The light which fell from the open portals upon the head of our Saviour will fall upon us as we pray for help to resist temptation. The voice which spoke to Jesus says to every believing soul, This is My beloved child, in whom I am well pleased.” (White, *The Desire of Ages*, 113.)



Share insights from this week's memory verse and Bible study as well as any discoveries, observations, and questions with your Sabbath School class (or Bible study group). Consider these discussion questions with the rest of the group.



Why is it such great news that Jesus reveals the character and the glory of the Father to us?

In what practical ways could a better understanding of Jesus enrich your relationship with God, the Father?

What is the importance of the eternal deity of Christ?

What is lost if we believe that Jesus were somehow, in some way, a created being, like us, but who went to the cross?

Contrast that thought with the reality that Christ is eternal God, and He Himself went to the cross. What is the big difference between the two ideas?

How is giving glory to God part of present truth and the three angels' messages?

How does this Christology impact our real-life experience?