

WHO IS JESUS, EXACTLY?

Hebrews 1:1-4

Newbegun United Methodist Church

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The Monday evening Bible Study just finished studying the Letter to the Hebrews. For me, it was a tough Bible Study. The Letter to the Hebrews is different in style, content, and thought from all the other NT letters. It is a tough read, but in spite of that, it is an amazing book. Hebrews has been called “The riddle of the NT,” because we don’t know much about it. No one knows for certain who wrote it. It was written somewhere between 70 and 80 AD. We don’t know where it was written or to whom it was specifically written to. When the church leaders determined which books would be included in the NT, all other books were chosen because they had a strong historical connection to an early church leader – Matthew, Mark, Paul, etc... but Hebrews had no connection. So why was it included? The leaders recognized that the book of Hebrews was just too good to ignore. The Letter to the Hebrews is about the sufficiency and the supremacy of the Christ, who is Jesus. In other words, Jesus the Christ is all you need, because there is nothing in the universe greater than Jesus. So, who is Jesus, exactly?

Chapter one of Hebrews teaches us that Jesus is supreme, above, and beyond everything created – in heaven and on earth. Even in the very first century people had different ideas about who Jesus was. He was called a prophet, a rabbi, a teacher, a healer, a rebel, an ethicist, and a good man. Hebrews immediately tells us Jesus was God. He is God in human form. Verse 3 reads, “The Son (Jesus) is the radiance of

God's glory and the exact representation of his being." In other words we are human and only human while Jesus was human and divine. Fully God and fully human. When you study Jesus – his words, his miracles – you are seeing what God is like. Jesus was once asked by Disciple Philip, "Show us the Father." And Jesus said to him, "If you have seen me, you have seen the Father." (John 14) How is that possible? Jesus didn't come into existence in that manger in Bethlehem. He existed before the foundation of the world. He existed for all eternity as God the Christ, the Savior. In verse 8 it reads, "But about the Son God says, 'Your throne, O God will last forever and ever.'" In other words you have God the Father talking about God the Son, Christ, Savior. I know that is hard to grasp intellectually and that is why we take all this on faith. However, it does go to reason that since God is God, than to be truly God, that God would have to be beyond our human understanding or grasp. If we could fully know God's intellect, then we would be God and that is not possible.

OK, so according to Hebrews, Jesus is God. What else would make us believe that? Well, Jesus, as God, created the world. Verse 2 reads, "In these last days God has spoken to us by His Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom God made the universe." Jesus, the Christ, also paid the price for our sins. Verse 3 reads, "After Jesus had provided purification for sins." The death of Jesus eliminated the problem of sin. We will study this more as we go through the Letter. Just know for now that one of the things he did was eliminate the power of sin over us. Hebrews also points out that Jesus did all he set out to do. Verse three again says, "After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven." The fact that he ascended to heaven and sits in a position of authority means that His

forgiveness goes on forever. It is not once and you are done. We need a Savior every day and he can do it. In Hebrews chapter 7 it reads, "Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them." (Hebrews 7:25) Jesus is the Christ because he is God, he did the creating, eliminated our sin, and he did all he was sent to do.

Lastly, the author of Hebrews points to the OT to shine light on who Jesus is. He quotes Psalm 2:7, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father." He quotes 2 Samuel 7:14, "I will be his Father, and he will be my Son." He quotes Psalm 102, "You remain the same, and your years will never end." And he quotes Deuteronomy, "Let all God's angels worship him."

In that last quote we come back around to the beginning of the purpose of the Letter to the Hebrews. Jesus is the Christ because he is superior of all things in heaven and on earth. He is greater than any angel; greater than any human High Priest, greater than any tradition or ritual. Jesus is the Christ; our God as our Savior. That is what the author of Hebrews wants us to believe. Then it becomes our own individual faith to believe or not believe about who Jesus is, exactly. Amen.