

4/26/26 A Big Vision of Jesus Produces a Strong Faith *Hebrews 1:1-14*
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Life has a way of shaking what we thought was secure. In the late 1920s, many Americans believed that the economy was unstoppable. The stock market crash of 1929 wiped out fortunes overnight – banks collapsed, millions lost jobs, and a Great Depression began. What felt like permanent prosperity turned out to be fragile. Before 2001, many people in the United States felt a sense of safety in daily life. Then, the 9/11 attacks instantly changed issues related to safety, privacy, and security. During the 2008 financial crisis, Lehman Brothers, a 158-year-old financial institution – considered “too big to fail” – collapsed. That moment exposed how even major pillars of the economy can suddenly crumble. As recently as 2019, life felt predictable with work, travel, and daily routines. Then, overnight, lockdowns, illness, and economic disruption – due to COVID-19 – changed how the entire world functioned. Stability in health systems, jobs, and supply chains proved more fragile than expected. There are many more examples we could cite from the last ten years, including what may prove to be the most disruptive change of all – the rise in Artificial Intelligence – but the point is, **life has a way of shaking what we thought was secure.**

In the New Testament Letter to the Hebrews, we discover a hope strong enough to hold when everything else feels uncertain. Today, we begin a new series in which we'll journey through Hebrews to show us Jesus Christ, who anchors our souls in God. Hebrews tells us that Jesus is the Son of God, the heir of all things, the King who reigns, our great High Priest, the perfect and final sacrifice, and our faithful forerunner. In the coming months, we'll hear sober warnings and deep encouragement, calling us not to drift, shrink back, or grow weary, **but to hold fast in faith.** Through it all, Hebrews points us to the truth that our hope is **Anchored in the Unchanging Christ**, who is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Listen to Hebrews chapter one.

“Long ago **God spoke** to our ancestors in many and various ways by **the prophets**, but in these last days he **has spoken** to us **by a Son**, whom he appointed **heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification**

for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. For to which of the angels did God ever say, ‘You are my Son; today I have begotten you’? Or again, ‘I will be his Father, and he will be my Son’? And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, ‘Let all God’s angels worship him.’ Of the angels he says, ‘He makes his angels winds, and his servants flames of fire.’ But of the Son he says, ‘Your throne, **O God**, is forever and ever, and the righteous scepter is the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.’ And, ‘In the beginning, Lord, you founded the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands; they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like clothing; like a cloak you will roll them up, and like clothing they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will never end.’ But to which of the angels has he ever said, ‘Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet’? Are not all angels spirits in the divine service, sent to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?”

Hebrews 1 emphasizes that Jesus is not merely another messenger from God, like a prophet. Jesus is no angel. **He is the ultimate revelation of God.** Jesus is God’s definitive, climactic, final word. **God’s fullest and final revelation is found in Jesus Christ — the Son who reveals God perfectly, accomplishes our salvation completely, and reigns supremely.** Hebrews begins by lifting our eyes to see how big Jesus really is. And the larger our vision of Jesus is, the stronger our faith becomes. That’s what I want to share with you today – how **A Big Vision of Jesus Produces a Strong Faith.**

Because we’re going to spend a lot of time in Hebrews, I want to give you some background. **Hebrews** is unique in style and content in the New Testament, and its original Greek is often called the best in the New Testament. We don’t know the author, but he knows a Timothy (*Hebrews 13:23*), and if this is the Timothy who shows up elsewhere in the New Testament, the author may be a contemporary of his. What’s called the Letter to the **Hebrews** isn’t, in fact, a letter. **It appears more like the manuscript of an eloquent sermon about the Supremacy and Glory of Christ**, and the preacher was likely a well-educated Jewish Christian who also had training in Greek thought. The preacher is writing to a community of Jewish Christians,

of which he is a part, who were under pressure and possibly persecution, sometime between the years 60 and 100 in the first century.

Because of hardship, some believers were tempted to drift back toward Judaism or a less costly faith, or to give up faith entirely. If you read the entire book, you get the sense that the congregation is exhausted. They're tired of everything – tired of serving the world, worship, Christian education; tired of being different and talked about by their neighbors; tired of praying. They don't even want to get together, and worship attendance is down. As Tom Long puts it, "Tired of walking the walk, many of them are considering taking a walk, leaving the community, and falling away from the faith."

The author responds to this spiritual weariness by preaching about **how great Jesus is**. The strategy is: if Christ followers see **how amazing Jesus is**, they'll remain faithful. When the preacher later calls for perseverance, faith, and endurance, the motivation is always because of **the supremacy of Christ**. We'll hear, in the first ten chapters of Hebrews, that **Christ is greater than everything the recipients of the letter once relied on** – including: **the prophets, angels, Moses, the priesthood, and the sacrificial system**.

The sermon opens with a Hymn of Praise to Christ. Many biblical scholars believe that *Hebrews 1:1-4* functions like an early Christian **hymn or confession of faith**. The language is poetic, rhythmic, and stacked with titles. The preacher is not just explaining theology, but **highlighting the greatness of Jesus**. Hebrews **begins with praise before instruction**. Before the sermon tells Christ followers *how* to live, endure suffering, or remain faithful, it first says: **look at Jesus**.

Hebrews begins this way for a reason. Before it tells us what to do, it shows us **who Jesus is**. Before it calls us to faithfulness, it shows us Christ's glory. The Christian life doesn't begin with **our effort**. It begins with **our vision of Jesus**. When we truly see who Christ is – the creator, the sustainer, the Savior, and the reigning King – trust, discipleship, and worship naturally follow. **The more clearly we see Jesus, the more faithfully we will follow him. A big vision of Christ produces a strong faith.**

Hebrews 1 is incredibly rich because it stacks multiple descriptions of Jesus in just a few verses – **Son, heir of all things, creator, the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, sustainer of the universe, purifier**

of sins, enthroned king, and superior to prophets and angels. If an artist were painting a portrait of Jesus, using *Hebrews 1*, the result would be a portrait of the Son.

Brushstroke 1: Jesus Is God’s Final Word (verses 1-2). *“In the past God spoke in many fragments and many fashions, **but** in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son.”* God is a talker. God spoke creation into existence and called it very good. God spoke to Abraham and Sarah, Moses and Miriam, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos, Hosea, and others. God has always spoken — through prophets, visions, scripture, in creation itself, in so many ways — but now, the communication is clearer than ever. Jesus is not just **another messenger. He is the message.** He is **God’s ultimate revelation.** The word spoken in Jesus doesn’t void the previous words and promises of God; it clarifies and fulfills them. The portrait begins with this truth: **when we see Jesus, we see what God is like.**

Brushstroke 2: Jesus Is the Heir of all things and the Creator (verse 2). *“Whom he appointed heir of all things, **through whom he also created the worlds.**”* The portrait grows larger. The child born in Bethlehem is also **the future ruler of everything and the creator of the universe.** I listened to a fascinating conversation on YouTube this week that my nephew Pietro sent me. It’s Stephen Meyer, John Lennox, and James Tour: Three Scientists on the Origins of Everything (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JW9gcjpt890>). These three top level scientists share the scientific reasons and evidence for an intelligent mind behind all of creation. *Hebrews* says that mind is Christ. Creation begins with him. As the Gospel of John puts it, *“In the beginning was the Word...”*

Brushstroke 3: Jesus Reveals God Perfectly (verse 3). *“He is the reflection of God’s glory and the exact imprint of God’s very being.”* **Reflection** — like a mirror reflecting sunlight shining from the sun. **Exact imprint** — like the precise stamp of a seal. Jesus doesn’t just resemble God. **He perfectly reveals God.** Jesus isn’t a word from God; he is *the* divine word. Church reformer John Calvin wrote, “The Father, however infinite, becomes finite in the Son... He shows himself only in the Son — as though he says, ‘Here I am. Contemplate me.’”

Brushstroke 4: Jesus Sustains the Universe (verse 3). *“He sustains all things by his powerful word.”* The portrait expands again. Not only did Jesus create the universe — **he is holding it together right now.** The same word that

brought the universe into existence keeps it from dissolving. Christ does not abandon creation; He constantly maintains it, from atomic structures to the movement of stars. Jesus Christ is not only the Creator, but also the active, continuous sustainer of the universe, holding all of creation together by his spoken command.

Brushstroke 5: Jesus Saves (verse 3). “*When he had made purification for sins...*” Then the portrait turns personal. The eternal Son, the heir, the reflection of God’s glory and the sustainer of the universe, entered our broken world and dealt with our deepest problem: **sin**. Through the cross, Jesus cleanses and renews the brokenness of creation, and opens the door to relationship with God and to eternal life.

Brushstroke 6: Jesus Reigns (verses 3-8). “*He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.*” This describes Jesus **on the throne as King**. Jesus is portrayed as sitting down because one sat down when work was completed. This quote is a reference to *Psalms 110:1*, a favorite verse of early Christians and of the preacher who mentions *Psalms 110* five times in Hebrews (*Hebrews 1:3, 13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2*). The previous phrase about “purification of sins” referred to the death of Jesus; this phrase to the resurrection and exaltation of Christ. The portrait is almost complete.

Brushstroke 7: Jesus is “superior to angels.” Like the Christ hymn found in *Philippians 2:5-11*, *Hebrews 1:5-14* asserts that the Son is higher even than the angels. The Preacher refers to seven Old Testament quotations to support this point. While angels are subordinate in status and fleeting by nature, the Son is majestic and everlasting. A central paradox of our faith is that the Jesus who suffered a humiliating death at the hand of evil is the same Son who is the reflection of God’s glory, the heir of all things, and far superior to angels. The picture is now complete. The Son is greater than angels, worthy of worship, and the eternal King.

Imagine you’re using a map app on your phone. If you zoom in too close, you only see **one street or building**. You might even feel lost. But when you **zoom out**, suddenly you see: the whole city, the highways, the direction you’re going. Now, everything makes sense. You see the big picture. People zoom in on Jesus and see him in just one way: as a healer, or as one who suffered on a cross, or someone to pray to.

But *Hebrews 1 zooms all the way out, so we can see that* Jesus is the Creator of the universe, the Reflection of God’s glory, the Sustainer of everything, and

the Eternal King. When we see that bigger picture, **our faith becomes steadier** because we realize the One we trust **holds the entire universe together. When your vision of Jesus gets bigger, your problems get smaller.**

Some people see Jesus as a teacher. Some see him as a prophet. Some see him as a moral example. But Hebrews paints a much bigger portrait. Jesus is the **creator of the universe, the perfect revelation of God, the purifier of sins, and the King who reigns forever.** Hebrews begins by reminding us that Jesus is far greater than we may imagine. The stronger our vision of Jesus becomes, the stronger our faith will be. And the question *Hebrews 1* leaves us with is: **Now that you see Christ more clearly — what will you do with him?**

The one who speaks God’s Word, saves our souls, and reigns over heaven is the same Jesus who invites us to trust him today. The Son who created the world, sustains the universe, reveals the Father, and reigns forever is the same one who died to forgive our sins.

Some people see Jesus as just a good teacher, a moral example, or a religious leader. But Hebrews pulls back the curtain and says: **look again.** The one born in Bethlehem... the one who walked the roads of Galilee... the one who died on the cross... is **the reflection of God’s glory, the creator of the world, the sustainer of the universe, and the King seated at God’s right hand.** And the writer of Hebrews invites us not merely to admire him, but **to trust him, follow him, and to anchor our life in him.**

Blessing: “To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy — to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen” (*Jude 1:24-25*).

Questions for Discussion or Reflection

1. *Hebrews 1:1-2* says that God spoke through the prophets in the past, but now speaks through a Son. How is hearing from Jesus different from hearing from prophets or teachers? Why do you think the author emphasizes this shift?
2. In verses 2-3, Jesus is described as heir of all things, creator of the universe, and the exact representation of God. Which description of Jesus, in this passage, stands out to you the most, and why? How does this bigger picture of Jesus affect how you trust Christ in everyday life?
3. Verse 3 says that Jesus sustains all things by His powerful word. What does it mean for your life that Jesus is actively holding the universe together right now? How could remembering this truth strengthen your faith during uncertainty?
4. Much of *Hebrews 1* (verses 4-14) compares Jesus with angels, and shows He is far greater. Why do you think the author spends so much time emphasizing Jesus' superiority? What are some things, today, that people might value or trust more than Jesus?
5. *Hebrews 1:6* says that all angels worship Him, and verses 8-12 describe Jesus as eternal and unchanging. How should seeing Jesus as eternal King shape our worship and obedience? What changes when our view of Jesus becomes bigger than our problems?
6. This whole passage paints a massive, cosmic picture of Jesus. How does having a bigger vision of Jesus help us have stronger faith? What practices help you keep that big vision of Jesus in focus during daily life?
7. Which truth about Jesus, from this passage, do you most need to remember this week?