**JESUS IS GOD’S FINAL WORD**

January 10, 2016

Hebrews 1:1-14

Key verse 1:2 “…but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son…”

Let’s begin with a question. Do you want to hear God speak? Have you ever said in a moment of desperation, “O God, if you would only speak! If I could only hear your voice. If you would only talk to me and not be so silent!” I have complained like that. Out of desperation, we seek God elsewhere. Some seek God through dreams. Some seek God through some false prophets who claim that they have received revelation from God. Some seek God through some supernatural experience. Some seek God through the angels. There is a renewed interest in angels in our culture. Television has had several programs on angels—such as Touched by an Angel. John Travolta was cast as a chain-smoking, hard drinking, womanizing angel in the movie called Michael. Angels are majestic and powerful servants of God who overwhelm people with their glory. In the book of Revelation John tells us what it was like when he had an encounter with an angel: “I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, ‘Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God!” (Revelation 19:10). Jesus is greater than any angel and angels worship him. In today’s passage God rebukes us to listen to Jesus. Why seek God through inferior means when we have God’s revelation in Jesus his Son.

Look at verse 1. “In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways.” God has spoken in two phases: before the coming of the Son of God into the world and through the Son of God’s coming into the world. Consider these two phases of God’s communication for a moment. Notice two crucial things.

**First**, God Spoke. He was not silent. God communicates. He means to connect with us. He is not an impersonal force in the universe. He is a person to be listened to and understood and enjoyed and obeyed. He is a speaking Person. There is no more important fact than this: There is a God who speaks that we might know him and love him and live in joyful obedience to him. God spoke.

**Second**, “through the prophets.” This means that God’s typical way of communicating with his people as a whole was by inspiring human spokesmen as go-betweens. It was not God’s way to write his Word in the sky, or to shout it from mountains for all to hear, or to appear in a dream to every Israelite. His usual way was to call a prophet and then inspire the prophet to speak and to write to the people what God wanted said. But don’t miss what this text says: When God spoke to the Israelites through the prophets, God spoke to them! When the Israelites heard and understood the prophets, they heard God speaking. God used chosen, inspired human instruments to speak to the Israelites. But it was God speaking to the Israelites when the prophets spoke and wrote.

After Adam sinned against God, man lost paradise, and suffered under the power of sin. If God remained silent, the plight of mankind would have been desperate. They would have suffered under the slavery of sin and death and hopelessness. By his mercy, God spoke through the prophets the coming of the Messiah Jesus Christ who would save them from their sins and restore the paradise. God spoke through the prophets about his salvation plan at many times and in various ways. God chose Abraham and gave him a covenant promise. God spoke to Moses through a burning bush. God spoke to Isaiah about the suffering servant. God revealed himself through dreams, visions, signs and miracles, and angels’ messages. All these revelations point to the coming Messiah. But they are incomplete. For example, as we studied during Christmas time, God showed Isaiah the coming Messiah, but he did not show that the Messiah would come twice, first time as the Lamb of God to die for our sins, second time as King of kings and Lord of lords to judge the living and the dead.

Let’s see verse 2a: “…but in these last days, he has spoken to us by his Son.” God gave the full and final revelation through his Son. Jesus fulfills all the revelations given in the Old Testament. Without him, the Old Testament revelation is partial, preparatory, and fragmentary. But in Christ, God spoke fully, decisively, finally and perfectly. The author of Hebrews is telling us that Jesus is superior to the prophets. God spoke to the people indirectly through the old prophets, but Jesus speaks to us directly as God. The prophets, great as they were, could not compare with him. They may have spoken the word of God, but Jesus was the Word of God.

Let’s look at three ways that the speaking of God in the Son in these last days is better than God’s speaking of old.

**First**, By his Son. God has now spoken not just by prophets, but by his Son. Look at verses 1,2a again. “In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son.” Notice it does not say, “Formerly God spoke by prophets and in these last days he has spoken by apostles.” In some sense, it is true. The apostles heard Jesus’ message and gave us his word. But the point here is that in these last days God has done something very different: to communicate, he sent his Son.

The Son of God is not just a prophet. Some thought that he was just a prophet (John 9:17), but he was not a mere prophet. Here Islam makes a great mistake about Jesus. Jesus is not only a prophet like Moses or Isaiah. And he is far above Mohammed in glory. He is the Son of God. Many Muslims misunderstand this term “Son of God” to mean that Jesus was God’s Son through physical relationship between God and Mary. Here Son of God means that Jesus is from God and he is the embodiment of God. When people say that Nelson Mandela is the son of Africa, it means that he is from Africa and he is the embodiment of Africa. So “Jesus is the Son of God” means that Jesus is God. Look verse 3. “The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being.” The point of those words is to warn us against the mistake that Islam has made. Jesus is the unique image of God’s divine glory and bears the very stamp of his divine nature. He is not a mere prophet. The whole point here is to show that he is superior to the prophets. He is the eternally begotten Son, without beginning and without ending (Hebrews 7:3).

In other words, God has not just spoken by inspiring prophets and apostles. He has spoken by coming to us in the person of his Son. Who Jesus was, what he said, and what he accomplished by dying and rising from the dead is God’s Word to us. This is what God has said, and what we should hear. Have I Heard the Word of God in the Person of Jesus? Every time I begin to complain that God is silent and that I need God to speak to me—at that moment I should stop and ask: Have I heard this Word? Is this Word from God—spoken in the Son of God—so short and simple that I have finished with it, and now I need more—another word? Have I really heard the Word of God in the person and the teaching and the work of the Son? Is the aching of my soul and the confusion of my mind really owing to the fact that I have exhausted hearing this Word and need another word? And so I feel another gracious rebuke to my unperceptive and presumptuous ears. So the first way that the speaking of God is better in these last days than in the prophets of old is that he has now spoken in the coming of his Son.

**Second**, the Son Appointed Heir of All Things. The second way that the speaking of God in these last days is better than in the former days is that the Son in whom he speaks has been appointed heir of all things.

Look at verse 2. “In these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things.” Now why does the author add this? Because he wants us to dwell on the fact that the one we listen to, Jesus, the Son of God, can make good in the end on all that he promises. Why? Because he is the heir of all things. In the end he will have at his disposal all things. He will have in subjection to him all that is. The author wants us to think about this. What does it mean to listen to the Son of God who in the end will have under his complete control and ownership all things (all land, all water, all fire, all wind, all energy, all natural resources, all nations, all military might, all buildings, all bacteria and viruses, all angels, all demons, all spiritual and material beings except God the Father)? Well, it means that he can make good on all his promises.

If he says, “Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth” (Matthew 5:5), then he can make good on that promise, because he will own the earth and have it under his control. If he says, “Nothing in all creation will separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:39), then he can make good on that promise because he will own all creation and have it under his control. If he says, “There shall no longer be death or mourning or crying or pain any more” (Revelation 21:1), he can make good on that promise because he will own life and death and rule unhindered over all that causes pain and crying. If he says, “Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well,” (Matthew 6:33), he can make good on that promise because he is the heir. When you listen to the Son of God, it is different from listening to a prophet. God will make good on the word of the prophets. But the Son will make good on his own word.

Jesus said, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16) He can make good on that promise because he died on the cross for our sins. The Creator and the Sustainer became the sin-bearer. In order to create the universe, he only had to speak. In order to maintain and guide the universe, he only has to speak. But in order to put away our sin once for all, he had to die on the cross. It is staggering to think that the sovereign Lord would stoop to become the sacrificial Lamb.

Sin is a broken relationship with God. When there is a broken relationship between a husband and a wife, it cannot be restored by force. It can only be restored by forgiveness. Likewise, a broken love relationship with God cannot be restored by force. It can only be restored by forgiveness. Jesus died on the cross to forgive our sins. He wants to show mankind that God loves them and he wants to restore the relationship. Only when we accept God’s offer of forgiveness, our sins are forgiven and our relationship will be restored. After completing salvation work for all men, now Jesus sits at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. Nobody sits down until he has finished his work. Here “sitting down” means that Jesus finished his salvation work. Jesus was enthroned in the heavenly authority. God crowned Jesus with honor and glory and made all knees to bow down before him. Now Jesus has a different mission. He intercedes for us. He hears our prayers. He is our advocate. God’s speaking in the Son is far superior over his speaking of old in the prophets. Jesus is not only the heir, but he is also the sustainer of all things. There is no such thing as luck or accident in God. Everything happens by God’s providence. Jesus is actively involved in this world.

**Third**, No Third Phase of Speaking. This Word of God in his son is so decisive and so full that there will be no third phase of God’s speaking in history. That is what it means when it says in verse 2: “in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son.” The last days begin with the coming of the Son into the world. We have been living in the last days since the days of Christ—that is, the last days of history as we know it before the final and full establishment of the kingdom of God. The last days of a war are the days after the decisive battle has been fought or the decisive bomb has been dropped. Everyone knows who will win. It is only a matter of time. The resistance may go on for some years, but the mortal blow has been struck to the enemy and the high ground has been captured. The days of fighting that remain are the last days of the war. So it is since the Son of God came into the world. In his death and resurrection, the decisive battle with sin and death and hell has been fought and won. It is only a matter of time. These are the last days bringing his decisive triumph to all the peoples of the earth. But the point for the author of Hebrews is this: The Word that God spoke by his Son is the decisive Word. It will not be followed in this age by any greater word or replacement word. This is the Word of God—the person of Jesus, the teaching of Jesus, and the work of Jesus. If anyone claims that God revealed another revelation, he is not from God. That includes Mohammed (Islam), Joseph Smith (Mormons), Charles Russell (Jehovah’s Witnesses), Sun-Myung Moon (Unification Church).

When I complain that I don’t hear the Word of God, when I feel a desire to hear the voice of God, and get frustrated that he does not speak in ways that I may crave, what am I saying? Did I really exhaust the final decisive Word revealed to me so fully in the New Testament and decided that I wanted something different, something more? Of course not! God is calling us to hear his final decisive Word—to meditate on it and study it and memorize it until it becomes the center of our being. Why seek God through inferior means when we have the final word in Jesus Christ?