

Lord Over All the Earth

Hebrews 1:1-4, 2:5-12

Do you ever get discouraged and wonder whether following Jesus is worth all the efforts? With the other choices of religious practices is Christianity really the best? William McClain in his introduction to the beginning of the Letter to the Hebrews reminds us that this circular letter was written to encourage Christians who were losing faith while contending with the challenges of society and wondering, “Is Christ ever coming back?” The Hebrew writer tells us God holds us in such high esteem that God puts our welfare above the angels and made redeeming us a priority.

The basic idea of this letter is that Jesus Christ alone brings to us the full revelation of God and that he alone enables us to enter into his very presence. The writer begins by contrasting Jesus with the prophets who had gone before. He talks about him coming in the end of these days. The Jews divided all time into two ages—the present age and the age to come. In between they set The Day of the Lord. The present age was wholly bad; the age to come was to be the golden age of God. The Day of the Lord was to be like the birth pangs of the new age. So the writer to the Hebrews says, “The old time is passing away; the age of incompleteness is gone; the time of human guessing and groping is at an end; the new age, the age of God, has dawned in Christ.” He sees the world entering into a new beginning with Christ. In Jesus God has entered humanity, eternity has invaded time, and things can never be the same again.

I find in the scriptures that we just read several twelve affirmations about Jesus to keep us faithful and encouraged.

1. Jesus Christ is the Son (vv. 4–5). The “more excellent name” that Jesus possesses is “Son.” Jesus put on humanity to come to minister on earth.¹ This is God’s supremely great Son; hear Him!²

2. Jesus is the seal and imprint of God’s very essence. He is the exact image of God. Just as when you look at the impression, you see exactly what the seal which made it is like, so when you look at Jesus you see exactly what God is like.

3. The original glory of God belongs to him. Jesus is God’s glory; therefore, we see with amazing clarity that the glory of God consists not in crushing us and reducing us to abject servitude, but in serving us and loving us and in the end dying for us. It is not the glory of shattering power but the glory of suffering love.

4. The writer to the Hebrews says that Jesus was God’s light which shines forth. Jesus is the shining of God’s glory among humans.

5. The intended empire belongs to Jesus. The New Testament writers never doubted his ultimate triumph. They were thinking of a Galilean carpenter who was crucified as a criminal on a cross on a hill outside the city of Jerusalem. They themselves faced savage persecution and were the humblest of people. And yet they never doubted the eventual victory. They were certain that God’s love was backed by his power and that in the end the kingdoms of the world would be the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ.

6. The creative action belongs to Jesus. The early Church taught that the Son had been God’s agent in creation, which in some way God had originally created

¹Wiersbe, Warren W.: *The Bible Exposition Commentary*. Wheaton, Ill. : Victor Books, 1996, c1989, S. Heb 2:5

²Walvoord, John F. ; Zuck, Roy B. ; Dallas Theological Seminary: *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An Exposition of the Scriptures*. Wheaton, IL : Victor Books, 1983-c1985, S. 2:780

the world through him. They were filled with the thought that the One who had created the world would also be the One who redeemed it.

7. The sustaining power belongs to Jesus. These early Christians had a tremendous grip of the doctrine of providence. They did not think of God as creating the world and then leaving it to itself. Somehow and somewhere they saw a power that was carrying the world and each life on to a destined end.

8. To Jesus belongs the redemptive work. By his sacrifice he paid the price of sin; by his continual presence he liberates us from sin.

9. Jesus has taken his place on the right hand of glory; but the tremendous thought of the writer to the Hebrews is that he is there, not as our judge but as one who makes intercession for us so that, when we enter into the presence of God, we go, not to hear his justice prosecute us but his love plead for us.³

Humans were meant to have dominion over everything but we have not. We are creatures who are frustrated by our circumstances, defeated by our temptations, limited by our weakness. We who should be free are bound; we who should be kings and queens are slaves. As G. K. Chesterton said, whatever else is or is not true, this one thing is certain—we are not what we were meant to be.

The writer to the Hebrews says into our situation came Jesus Christ. He suffered and he died, and because he suffered and died, he entered into glory. And that suffering and death and glory are all for us, because he died to make us what we ought to be. He died to rid us of our frustration and our bondage and our weakness and to give us the dominion we ought to have. He died to recreate us until we became what we were originally created to be.

³ Barclay, William, lecturer in the University of Glasgow (Hrsg.): *The Letter to the Hebrews*. Philadelphia : The Westminster Press, 2000, c1975 (The Daily Study Bible Series, Rev. Ed), S. 11

The writer to the Hebrews sees in Christ the One, who by his sufferings and his glory can make us what we were meant to be and what, without him, we could never be.

Last, the writer calls Jesus the pioneer of glory. He is head or chief, as a general is the head of his army, or the founder of a city or of a family. The pioneer is one who begins something in order that others may enter into it. One who begins a family that some day others may be born into it; he founds a city in order that others may some day dwell in it; he founds a path that others may follow him into the truth and the peace that he himself has discovered; he is the author of blessings into which others may also enter, one who blazes a trail for others to follow. Someone has used this analogy. Suppose a ship is on the rocks and the only way to rescue is for someone to swim ashore with a line in order that, once the line is secured, others might follow. The one who is first to swim ashore will be the pioneer of the safety of the others. This is what the writer to the Hebrews means when he says that Jesus is the pioneer of our salvation. Jesus has blazed the trail to God for us to follow.

It was through Jesus' sufferings that he was really identified with us. And it was through this identity Jesus Christ sympathizes with us. He literally feels with us. It is almost impossible to understand another person's sorrows and suffering unless we have been through them. A person without a trace of nerves has no conception of the tortures of nervousness. A person who is perfectly physically fit has no conception of the weariness of the person who is easily tired or the pain of the person who is never free from pain. A person who learns easily often cannot understand why someone who is slow finds things so difficult. A person who has never sorrowed cannot understand the pain at the heart of the person into whose life grief has come. A person who has never loved can never understand either the

sudden glory or the aching loneliness in the lover's heart. Before we can have sympathy we must go through the same things as the other person has gone through—and that is precisely what Jesus did. Because he sympathizes Jesus can really help. He has met our sorrows; he has faced our temptations. As a result he knows exactly what help we need; and he can give it.⁴

So who is Jesus? Son, heir, creator, reflection of God, exact imprint of God, sustainer, purifier of sin, one seated at the right hand of God, superior to angels, the one who brings us to glory, our pioneer, the one who is mature, our brother, our savior, our Lord. Amen.

⁴ Barclay, William, lecturer in the University of Glasgow (Hrsg.): *The Letter to the Hebrews*. Philadelphia : The Westminster Press, 2000, c1975 (The Daily Study Bible Series, Rev. Ed), S. 22