

**The Final Word**  
*Christ is Enough Series*  
**Hebrews 1:1-14**  
Pastor Bryan Clark

As a pastor, one of the things I am reminded of weekly is there is a lot of pain and heartache and suffering in the world. A few years ago I was visiting with a friend of mine—pretty wealthy and, honestly, had lived a pretty charmed life—and he made the comment, “Sometimes it feels like this is heaven,” to which I said, “Man, you need to get out more because there is a lot of pain and there's a lot of heartache and there's a lot of suffering in the world.” Every week when we gather, I'm always reminded there's a lot of pain in this room. I don't know what it is for you. Maybe it's a disease that just won't go away. Maybe it's chronic pain that disables you every single day. Maybe it's an addiction that just won't stop. Maybe it's a broken relationship. Maybe you've been betrayed by someone you trusted. Maybe it's a financial crisis. Maybe it has to do with your job. Maybe it's the death of a dream and you're coming to grips with the fact your life's not going to be the way you always thought it would be. I don't know what it is for you...but *you* know...you know what it is. So here's my question. “Do you believe, no matter what it is you're going through, that Christ is enough?” Now, we all know what the right answer is. That's not what I'm asking. This isn't a quiz. I'm asking, in your heart of hearts, “Do you really believe Jesus is enough for whatever it is you're going through?” Most of the culture would say, “No!” They're willing to believe about anything and they're willing to pursue about anything in order to avoid Jesus. But what about us? As Christians, we've identified ourselves as followers of Christ. My experience over the years has been, and it's often true, that we as Christians believe Jesus is good for the ticket to heaven, and that's a good thing. But for the real problems—the real practical stuff of life—we often find ourselves turning to so many other things, so many other directions, because it seems we lack the belief in our hearts, in the worst moments of life, no matter what, Jesus will be enough.

Well that's the question we're going to wrestle with for the next several months: “Is Christ enough?” We're going to work our way through the New Testament book of Hebrews as we wrestle with that question. So if you have a Bible, turn with us to the book of Hebrews. With a few breaks for this and that, this study will take us pretty much all the way to Easter.

The book of Hebrews is unique in the sense that it's the only New Testament book where we do not know who the author is. I'm absolutely sure the first readers knew; it wasn't anonymous to them but we, today, don't know. Some people think Paul, although that's less and less convincing today. Most scholars think this was written at the latter part of the 60's—so 67, 68, 69AD, in which case Paul would have been executed by then. Barnabas? Luke? Silas? Apollos? There are lots of different names that are put out there but the bottom line is we don't know, so we're going to leave it at that.

Second of all, we're not completely sure who the audience is. We could guess from the content of the letter that they are people very familiar with the Old Testament. There are a lot of allusions to the Old Testament, a lot of quotations from the Old Testament. Many of those, you can tell from the wording, are allusions to the Septuagint which is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament. You can just tell by the wording that's what's being referred to, so we would say Jewish believers but also a mix of Gentile believers. In the first century, the Gentile believers, through the teachings in the synagogue, would have been very familiar with the Septuagint. So it certainly wouldn't be limited to just Jewish believers, and as I think is true with all the New Testament writings targeting believers, an assumption is there are unbelievers mixed in as would be true of any

church or gathering of believers. So generally speaking, the recipients are Jewish and Gentile believers with an assumption there are some unbelievers in the mix.

Scholars are pretty confident this was written at the latter part of the 60's so this would have been under the persecution of Nero. The persecution at this point is getting pretty intense. In AD70, the fall of Jerusalem, everything comes crashing down; things are really getting intense and moving to really an all-out slaughter. It appears that those that were believers, many of them were considering maybe going back to their old ways. As the persecution got more and more intense, they're thinking about turning back out of their fear, perhaps out of their uncertainty, and maybe there were those that never really turned to Christianity from Judaism that were seeking to convince others to join them. And so the heartbeat of the book of Hebrews is in the midst of the trials and the persecution, asking, "Where are you going to turn?" "Who are you going to turn to?" "What are you going to turn back to?" "Everything else would be inferior." "In the most difficult moments of life, why would you do that?" "Why would you not trust that Christ is enough?" That's kind of the heartbeat of the book of Hebrews.

So, chapter 1, verse 1: (Verses 1 through 4 are one long run-on sentence in Greek, so clearly meant to be taken in kind of one breath, one running opening.) The subject is God. What has God done? Verse 1:

**God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways,** (\*NASB, Hebrews 1:1)

The subject is **God**. What do we know about God? We know that God is a God who speaks. He is not a God who has remained silent. In the Old Testament, in the old covenant God spoke through the **prophets**. Prophets here are not limited to major and minor prophets in the Old Testament but prophets meaning the main characters of the Old Testament. So God spoke through the main players. He spoke through the Old Testament Scriptures. **Many portions** means *many ages over a considerable amount of time*; **many ways**—through the Scriptures, through dreams, through visions, through a number of different ways God communicated in the old covenant. Verse 2:

**...in these last days has spoken to us in His Son...**

So, **last days** is a reference to Old Testament prophecies that then defines the time from the time of Christ until the return of Christ. So sometimes I hear people today say, "I think we might be living in the last days," to which I always reply, "I know we are. It started with Christ and it will go until the return of Christ." Biblically speaking, that defines the period known as the *last days*. Now part of that was carrying the idea that in the old covenant God was communicating, making promises of a Messiah, of a Savior that would come. So everything in the old covenant—the Old Testament—is looking forward to the fulfillment of that promise. It's one ongoing story. Jesus is the fulfillment of those promises. Jesus isn't just one more communication in the line of prophets. Jesus isn't one more word from God; He is the *final word* from God. So the idea is all throughout the old covenant they were looking forward. But now the promise has been fulfilled; the Savior has come, so we stand in the finished work, the completion of what Jesus has done on the cross. So Jesus ushered in this New Covenant and the only thing that remains is the return of Christ. So these are the **last days**, living in the fulfillment of the promise and the responsibility of the Church to accomplish her mission. So **...in these last days has spoken to us in His Son**—the final word!

Now the writer goes through a series of affirmations related to who Jesus is. All of it has to do with this idea that Jesus is superior to everyone else and everything else. It all comes back to this idea of:

where else would you turn, for every direction you turn is going to be inferior to the exalted Christ. So, again, frame this discussion around whatever it is you're going through, whatever it is you're facing, wrestling with the question, "Is this Jesus enough to get you through whatever it is?"

**...in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom he appointed heir of all things,**

Now the language in these verses can get a little confusing. **Appointed** or you see in verse 4: *He has become much better*, so it almost sounds like He wasn't before and now has somehow risen, like he wasn't God but now is fully God, and that would be a complete misunderstanding of the text. Think of it this way: Jesus is the eternal Son of God—fully God from all eternity—Father, Son, Holy Spirit. That's not in question but there was a moment in time where the eternal God of the universe—God the Son—did actually take on human flesh and become the God-man in order to fulfill the promise to be the Savior of the world. He completed the mission and returned to the Father in an exalted position because He had completed the assignment. So the focus of the writer of Hebrews is not on the nature of the Son but rather as the God-man—the mission, what we call the *work of Christ*. We refer to *the person and work of Christ*, that the eternal God did become flesh, did do the work, accomplished the work, and there is an exalted reward because the work is completed. So that's what these terms are referring to.

The idea of being an **heir**—talked about in Ephesians chapter one in glorious terms—simply means that He both has authority over and possesses all things—all things—all people, all powers in the universe! He has authority and power over everything. He was:

**...appointed heir of all things through whom also He made the world,**

...identifying Jesus, the one God, the Son who became flesh, is the creator of the universe. So when you read Genesis 1:1 "In the beginning God," Elohim, that is what we refer to as the pre-incarnate Christ—that is Jesus before He became the God-man. God the Son is the creator of the universe. The idea that something came from nothing is foolishness and there are more and more scientists, secular and Christian alike, who are getting on board with this idea that there is no way something came from nothing. There had to be a beginning point, which means there had to be some sort of a cause. As Christians, we just go back to the first verse of the Bible—"**God...In the beginning God,**" but specifically the Son was the creator of the universe. This is affirmed in the Gospel of John, chapter one. This is affirmed in Colossians, chapter one. Verse 3:

**And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature,**

Now that's a little bit more difficult to explain but basically **the radiance** of the full glory of God emanates out of Jesus. He wasn't lesser God; He's the full radiance of God. Think of it this way: In the Old Testament Moses said to God, "I want to see Your glory." God said to Moses, "Moses, if you saw My glory, it would kill you. So here's what we're going to do. We are going to put you in the cleft of the rock." God said, "I'm going to put My hand over the cleft and I'm going to go past, and right at the end I'm going to give you a glimpse, literally of my hindquarters. and that's all you can take and survive," and Moses glowed for days!

So the radiance of God that Moses just got a glimpse of is the radiance of Christ—fully God—radiant in every way, **the exact representation!** Colossians says that Jesus is *the visible manifestation of the invisible God*. The word **representation** is a Greek word that meant like a stamp or a dye. It would have been very familiar to them, for example of a dye that stamped out

coins—one after another—that perfectly replicated the image on the dye. Jesus is the perfect representative, the visible manifestation of the invisible God,

**...and upholds all things by the word of His power.**

Colossians 1 would say not only *the creator of the universe* but the *sustainer of the universe*—not just holding it up, but actively sustaining the universe. Scientists today can identify things in our universe that are true—things that they even go so far as to say are laws but what they often can't explain is: “*Why* is that true?” “We discover this is true; we just can't explain why it's true.” We would say it's because Jesus not only is the creator but he is the sustainer. He holds it all together.

**When he had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, (Vs. 3b)**

This same Son, who is the creator, who is the sustainer, who is the full radiance of God, is the One who took on human flesh *in order to make purification for sin*, to fulfill the promise of a Messiah—in order that we might know forgiveness of sin. So it raises this question: Is there connectivity to all of this? Who has authority to forgive sin? Who has authority to say you are *purified from your sins*? No church, no priest, no pastor, no denomination, no religion. I can't go out tomorrow and say, “I'm going to die for the sins of the world,” because I myself am a sinner; I can't even cover my own sins; I have no power and authority to declare that somehow my death has purified the sins of the world. What would have to be true to have the authority to purify sin? Seems to me you'd have to have the authority, power, possession, and ownership over everything. You'd have to be the *creator*. You'd have to be the *sustainer*. You'd have to be *the full radiance of God*. Only God has the authority to say that covered the sins of the world! It's true; it is mysterious and sometimes confusing to figure out how exactly that death two thousand years ago covers my sin. I understand that. But who's in charge? The One who created, the One who possesses, the One who sustains, the One who is fully God in every way and He is the One that said, “This is what My Son did and this is the result of it, and this is what I offer you.” Only God could offer that because of who He is as God.

The idea of *sitting down at the right hand of God* is very significant. In the old covenant, the priests daily had responsibilities in the tabernacle and the temple to offer sacrifice and do their required work, but the priests were not allowed to ever sit down on the job. The reason for that is it carried the message that the work is never completed and so they always had to remain standing, always at work, because the work was never done. Hebrews will talk a fair amount about that but all of that was foreshadowing a promise that one day the Messiah would come and He would make sacrifice for sin once and for all.

When John the Baptist identified Jesus he said, “Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.” So when Jesus purified for sin through His death on the cross, He Himself said it while He hung on the cross, “Tetelestai;” *it is finished* meaning *paid in full*. The result of that is He sat down at the right hand of the Father, communicating the work is finished once for all—completed! Now He sits. This is a very powerful statement—that Jesus has accomplished the mission! Verse 4:

**...having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they.**

Now I'll talk about verse four in just a minute but I want us to go back and process a little bit of what we just heard. So God has spoken the final message, the final word in His Son. Who is this Jesus? He is the owner, possessor, and has authority over everything. He is the creator of the universe. He spoke the universe into place. He is the sustainer of the universe. He radiates with the full glory of God and He was the One authorized to make payment for sin, to offer salvation to those who by faith receive it. If all of that is true, help me understand, "What is it you're going through today that is too big for this Jesus?" Every other direction you turn, everything else you turn to will be inferior, will be *less than*. Why is this Christ not enough? Why is it that we can't trust Him in the most difficult moments of life?

Starting in verse four he kind of turns this conversation to Jesus being superior to the angels. That seems like kind of an odd conversation to us. So what is behind that? Basically from this point to the end of the chapter, he's going to make his point—his case from the Old Testament—that that's clearly the case. Some think that there was some problem with angel worship and that may be. There is some evidence, especially between the end of the book of Malachi—the end of the Old Testament—and the beginning of the New Testament. There is some evidence that the Jews got caught up in angel worship, and that may be the background here. I would suggest maybe another answer. If you think about Hebrews and its emphasis on the Old Testament and the old covenant and Jesus being superior, you think about how this book just opened up, I think it's highly likely that part of what was happening is there were those Judaizers that were seeking to lure these Jewish believers back to Judaism, back to the old covenant, back to their old ways. There may have been some of them that were just thinking about returning to their old practices on their own because of the persecution, and it was safe or maybe even reasoning that if God was in this, this wouldn't be happening. So maybe we are off track; maybe we need to go back to the old way. There seems to be a lot in Hebrews that indicates that's a big concern.

We know that when Moses received the commandments on Mount Sinai—essentially the old covenant—that the angels were there. They were messengers or help mediate that message to Moses. So imagine that you are a Judaizer and you are trying to convince these believers to go back to the old covenant. Part of the argument could be that Jesus was just a man. He was just another one of God's prophets but He certainly doesn't have the authority to overthrow the message of the angels. He certainly doesn't have the authority to usher in a new covenant as if somehow He's taking over. He's certainly not higher than the angels. You can imagine that line of thinking as a justification for holding on to the old covenant.

So now think about what the writers are saying about who Jesus is—that Jesus wasn't just another prophet. He wasn't just another word from God. He is the *final word*, and then the list of things we just talked about. The last part of the chapter goes back to a number of Old Testament passages to make his case—that Jesus is superior to the angels. It's almost as if he's saying, "If you're going to talk about the Old Testament, let's talk about the Old Testament because it's pretty clear that the Son is over the angels." So I don't want to get caught up in a lot of the details of this. I just want to make the case that the writers tried to make. So verse 5:

**For to which of the angels did He ever say,**

**"YOU ARE MY SON,  
TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU"?**

That's from Psalm 2 and of course the obvious answer is, "Never!" God identified Jesus as His Son, not the angels. This verse is quoted at Jesus' baptism. It's quoted at Jesus' transfiguration. Paul

quotes it in a sermon in the book of Acts. So it's a much quoted verse when God the Father identified Jesus as His Son.

**And again,**

**“I WILL BE A FATHER TO HIM  
AND HE SHALL BE A SON TO ME”?**

This is taken from 2 Samuel, chapter 7, verse 14. This is David talking about Solomon as the future King of Israel but it is a foreshadowing of God the Father identifying one in David's line, His Son, who will be the ultimate king, the fulfillment of the prophecy, and obviously he's never said that of the angels. Verse 6:

**And when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says,**

**“AND LET ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD WORSHIP HIM.”**

So there's nowhere that the Son is to worship the angels but the Old Testament clearly says the angels should gather and worship the Son. Verse 7:

**And of the angels He says,**

**“WHO MAKES HIS ANGELS WINDS,  
AND HIS MINISTERS A FLAME OF FIRE.”**

This is a quote from Psalm 104. There are a couple of different ways this verse is interpreted. I think best understood the psalmist is saying and the writer of Hebrews is now affirming that God uses the wind and the lightning as messengers. So the angels are messengers of God like the wind and the lightning. Angels are magnificent beings. They are created by God. They are powerful beings. They have a significant role in God's economy. So the writer is saying angels are utterly magnificent but they're just messengers whom God uses to accomplish His mission. Verses 8 and 9:

**But of the Son *He* says,**

**“YOUR THRONE, O GOD, IS FOREVER AND EVER,  
AND THE RIGHTEOUS SCEPTER IS THE SCEPTER OF HIS KINGDOM.  
“YOU HAVE LOVED RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HATED LAWLESSNESS;  
THEREFORE GOD, YOUR GOD, HAS ANOINTED YOU  
WITH THE OIL OF GLADNESS ABOVE YOUR COMPANIONS.”**

Jesus, the eternal Son of God, is not just another messenger, he's not just another prophet. He is God and the Old Testament clearly identifies Him as such and finally verses 10-12:

**And,**

**“YOU, LORD, IN THE BEGINNING LAID THE FOUNDATION OF THE EARTH,  
AND THE HEAVENS ARE THE WORKS OF YOUR HANDS;  
THEY WILL PERISH, BUT YOU REMAIN;  
AND THEY ALL WILL BECOME OLD LIKE A GARMENT,  
AND LIKE A MANTLE YOU WILL ROLL THEM UP;  
LIKE A GARMENT THEY WILL ALSO BE CHANGED.**

**BUT YOU ARE THE SAME,  
AND YOUR YEARS WILL NOT COME TO AN END.”**

Again just affirming that Jesus as the creator, one day heaven and earth will pass away; He'll roll it up like a garment and discard it and usher in the new heaven and the new earth. Angels don't do that; God does that! Finally verse 13:

**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”?**

Verse 14:

**Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?**

So again there is this affirmation: angels are magnificent beings! They are created by God. They are extremely powerful but they are messengers, servants of God that are sent out by God in order to minister to the saints. They are not over the eternal Son of God.

So who is this Jesus that has ushered in the new covenant, that is drawing this persecution? For these first century believers He is the owner, possessor and authority over everything. He is the creator of the universe, the Genesis 1:1 God. He is the sustainer of the universe. He is the eminence of God, radiates the fullness of the glory of God, is the exact representation of God. He is the one authorized to become the purifier of sinners, that we might experience God's salvation, sitting majestically over the angels as the eternal Son of God.

So now we're back to our question today. If that's true, you remind me, what is the problem you're facing this morning that is just too big for this Jesus? Where are you going to turn? Wherever you turn, it's going to be inferior! Who are you going to turn to? Whoever you turn to is going to be inferior! Why would we not believe in the worst moments of life, no matter what, this Jesus is going to be enough?

Our desire as a team is over the next several months we, together in our hearts, will come to believe with great confidence that no matter what it is we're going through, we do believe Christ is enough!

*Our Father we just pray that You would open up our hearts and our minds in these weeks to come to believe with all of our hearts, not just with our heads, but with our hearts that no matter what it is we're facing in this life, Jesus is enough and we can trust Him.  
Lord, may that be so! In Jesus' name, Amen.*

*(Recitation):*

*I've heard it said that Christ is enough! That He is God...that He was present before creation and during creation...that He made everything that we can see and everything we can't. He was there at the beginning of all things and that He will be there at the end...that He is present now*

*even in this place, and I've heard it said that He is good and faithful and always for me and that He alone holds everything together. But if I'm honest, I don't really understand how that works. How can He be holding everything together when my life is falling apart...when I lose material possessions...when natural disaster strikes...when the relationship that I thought would complete me wrecks me and when the job that I thought would fill me destroys me...when my very own body fails me and when the sin that I've been hiding inside is brought to light and the consequences are even more painful than I ever could have imagined...when the people that I love hurt me, abuse me and leave me...when the thing that I thought I wanted most in this life slips through my grasping hands like water? When my life is in shambles, will Christ be enough for me? Can Christ be enough for me? I read in the Bible that Christ was enough for the Apostle Paul. He was surrounded by trouble but his spirit was not crushed; that he was confused but never driven to despair, and then he was hunted down by men but never abandoned by God. He was knocked down over and over and over again but he was never destroyed—and he wasn't a superhero. He was just a guy like me who believed that Christ was enough...that You, Jesus, are enough. I hope that's true. I really want it to be true. Help me to believe that it is!*

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## **The Final Word**

*Christ is Enough*

Hebrews 1:1-14

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### **Opening Discussion**

1. Share something difficult or painful that you or someone you care about is going through right now. What are the emotions or questions that arise?
2. What are some of the things people turn to other than Jesus to deal with the painful struggles of life?

### **Bible Study**

1. Read Hebrews 1:1-14. What do you know about the author, recipients and background of this book?
2. In 1:1-4 the text identifies affirmations regarding Jesus. Talk about each one listed below and look up the supplemental references included. With each one wrestle with the question “is Christ enough?” and why or why not?
  - a. Heir of all things. Ephesians 1:7-10
  - b. Creator. John 1:1-3; Col. 1:15-17
  - c. Exact Representation. Col 1:15, John 14:8-11
  - d. Upholds all things (sustainer). Col 1:17
  - e. Purifier. John 1:29; 19:30
  - f. Excellent name: Phil. 2:5-11
3. Beginning in 1:4 through 14 the writer is arguing for the superiority of Jesus over the angels. What are the ways the writer identifies Jesus as superior? In what ways does the writer identify the deity of Christ? Why would someone trust or worship angels who are inferior to Christ? Compare Isa. 6:1-7, Rev. 4:1-11. Is Christ enough?
4. What is the role of angels according to 1:14? What do you think that means? See also Hebrews 13:2.

## **Application**

1. Even Christians seem to turn to so many people or things for help in time of need rather than Jesus. It's not that others can't be helpful to us, they can, but do we really believe that ultimately Jesus is enough? Is that evident in our thoughts and actions on a daily basis? Is Jesus just a ticket to heaven for us or is He more in very real and practical ways? Why or why not?
2. If Jesus is enough, what does that look like for you on a daily basis? How does that conviction actually play out in real life? Discuss this together as a group.