

Jesus, God's Son

A Slightly Superior Son?

- Glasgow used to promote itself with the slogan: "Glasgow's Miles Better!"
- but when we lived in Edinburgh some people seemed to think that "Edinburgh's Slightly Superior"!!
- Often I think we have the latter kind of view of Jesus, God's Son.
- We don't seem to think he's "Miles Better" - more like he's "Slightly Superior", a bit better than us... but not vastly!
- that seems to be our outlook, our understanding
- perhaps that's why our discipleship, our desire to follow him, is sometimes a bit half-hearted
- perhaps that's why we do sometimes feel like giving up, like allowing our commitment to Jesus and his Church to wane
- perhaps that's why people "out there" don't find Christianity attractive
- If Jesus is only "slightly superior" to us, he may be due some grudging admiration, but little more:
- no whole-hearted praise, no self-sacrifice, no selfless devotion, no amazing devotion!
- But really, far from being "Slightly Superior", Jesus is "Miles Better"
- greater, more marvellous, more wonderful, more amazing, more holy than anyone and everything in the whole of creation and beyond.
- That's exactly what the writer of the Hebrews was seeking to communicate in the passage we read earlier.

Greater than Angels

- That writer was particularly concerned to demonstrate that Jesus was superior to angels - presumably a mis-understanding his first readers suffered from
- However, in doing so he takes the time to weave together three dimensions in which the Son - God's Son, Jesus Christ - is not just "slightly superior" but "miles better"
- and not just than angels, but than everything and everyone else
- **In Revelation 4:8: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come."**
- The cry of praise of the angels round the throne in heaven.
- Picking up on the three dimensions the writer to the Hebrews touches upon:
- "who was" - pre-history, before the world was made
- "who is" - in history, God made flesh, Jesus walking the roads of Galilee & Judea
- "and is to come" - to eternity, the glory and honour now his as risen Lord
- Lets examine each of these dimensions of Jesus supremacy now:

The Son... who was (Pre-History)

- Two parts to this; two aspects:

The Son who is God

- The Son... who is God
- Stupendous statement!
- Jesus, the Son, (v.3) "reflects the brightness of God's glory and is the exact likeness of God's own being"!!!
- Not just a man who lived in Palestine, a good man, a holy man.
- Not just someone who paid the supreme price for others.
- Not just someone who had power, who could work miracles.

- over nature
- over illness
- over demons
- Not just someone who could beat death.
- Not even just some heavenly or demonic being who could do all these things, or imbue someone with the ability to do them.
- No - nothing half-hearted about the claims!!!
- Jesus is God's Son, and as such he is divine - he accurately and completely reflects everything about God.
- Indeed, the Greek word for "reflects" is more **active** than **passive**:
 - **not like a mirror**, so much as a **blazing, radiant light** - shining out God
- Jesus has all of God's power, all of God's utter purity and holiness, all of God's desire to show mercy, all of God's love, all of God's perfect justice, all of God.
- Jesus is, as he always has been - God, the very Son of the Father Almighty.

The Son who created

- That brings us onto second aspect:
 - it was through his Son, through Jesus, that God created the universe.
 - **every star; every planet; every galaxy; every black hole**
 - **every atom, every electron, every quark, every proton & neutron; every law of Physics**
 - **every mountain range; every river; every sea; every hill; every valley**
 - **every plant; every animal; every microbe; every blade of grass; every hair on your head!**
 - **every human; every emotion; every love; every joy; every brain-wave..**
- **Absolutely everything - God made through Jesus Christ his Son.**
- You know what that means?
 - all the beauty and wonder, all the awe-inspiring creativity we see around us - not just in nature itself, but in every good and beautiful work of human hands - every Michaelangelo, every Shakespeare, every Beethoven, every Rennie Macintosh, every Einstein...
 - **...all of this derives from, and is sustained by, Jesus Christ.**
- **He stands behind everything that is good**
 - not simply that he is powerful, though he is indeed
 - but also that he has planned every detail of this amazing universe for us to enjoy and steward
- Jesus is indeed **"Miles Better"** - not just **"slightly superior"** to us, but far beyond, far greater, far better, far more wonderful - in his very nature as God, and as the one who created this vast universe.

The Son... who is (History)

- If that's the first dimension - the dimension of pre-history, of the God **"who was"** as well as who is and is to come, what's the second?
- The second dimension is that Jesus came into history - broke through from eternity into the finitude of this earth.
- There are, I think, two aspects that the author of Hebrews highlights:
 - spoken to us, perfect communication
 - achieved forgiveness for our sins

The Son who speaks

- v.1/2: **"In the past, God spoke to our ancestors many times and in many ways through the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us through his Son."**
- Comparison going on here - between the communication method that God has employed in the past, and the communication method he has chosen to employ **"in these last days."**
- Many times - many ways - prophets - law - acted signs of power - victory and

defeat in battle - poetry and song...

- Over and over, God revealed himself - but always through imperfect men and women.
- They truly revealed - but were equally truly limited.
- And so God sent his Son - to communicate with ultimate clarity, ultimate power, to communicate by being himself - by being the very divine Son of God clothed in flesh and blood.
- "What more could God have done?" is, if you like, the implication behind the writer's words.
- We live in an age of amazing communication advances - phone, fax, TV, tele-conferencing, print, e-mail & Internet, letter...
- And yet its still true that the best communication happens face to face, where we can see and feel and relate and interact as well as just hearing.
- So that's exactly what Jesus did - he came to live among us, face to face, not just passing through, but for thirty or more years.
- In these last days, God has spoken, once for all, with awesome clarity and power for those who will care to listen - through Jesus, by miles the best communicator of good news there ever was or will be.

The Son who forgives

- The fact that Jesus broke into history and communicated God's love and message with such awesome power and simplicity is not the only aspect.
- For, again, it was in history that Jesus "achieved forgiveness for the sins of mankind."
- At the heart of the Christian Good News, of the message we have from Jesus to pass on, is that in Jesus there is forgiveness for sin:
 - for all the guilt and shame, for all the inadequacy, for all the lies and deceptions, for all the unfaithfulness and disloyalty, for all the selfishness and hatred we hide away in our hearts.
- And how did that forgiveness come about?
 - as Jesus, whose perfect life deserved no punishment, willing took on our sin, our guilt - took the punishment that should have been ours onto his own shoulders as he gave himself to be killed on the Cross at Calvary.
 - as Jesus rose again, breaking the power of death, proclaiming his victory
- And all of that firmly in history - in Jerusalem, in around 30 AD, with many witnesses looking on.
- No one else has ever been able to forgive sins - remember the Pharisee's shock at Jesus' claim to be able to do so: "Only God can forgive sin!"
- And so, as communicator and as forgiver, Jesus really is "Miles Better".

The Son... who is to come (Eternity)

- In pre-history, in history, Jesus is miles better.
- The God who was, and is, is also the God who "is to come", the one whose reign and rule extend into eternity.
- And its this third dimension that the author of Hebrews also makes clear in these opening verses of the book.

The Son who completes

- Towards the end of v.3, he says "After [Jesus] had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven."
- Jesus has returned to heaven, to his Father's side, to the place of honour and glory and majesty, of perfect peace, of perfection and purity.
 - (incidentally, in Greek use "Majesty" or "Supreme Power" rather than God's name, reflective of the holiness of God's name, not to be used lightly!)
- That is, as we've seen, Jesus' place by right.

- But that's not the only significance of the phrasing.
- "He sat down" - implies rest, completion - the task that God had given him, the task of communication, the task of making forgiveness possible - that task has been completed - utterly, totally, finally.
- No repeated sacrifice, as there had to be in the Temple, no danger of a slip in obeying fully the Law - nothing that can endanger position as adopted sons and daughters of the Living God! - nothing that can separate us from the love of God in Christ!

The Son who inherits

- The final aspect that we'll look at this evening is mentioned at the end of v.2:
 - Jesus is "appointed heir of all things"
 - the Son who inherits
 - who has possession, control over, power and authority over - everything at the end.
- God has given over to Jesus the responsibility for wrapping up things concerning this universe - everything is his to dispose of as he sees fit <black>:
 - specifically, he will judge everyone at the end of time, we learn elsewhere (eg Acts 10:42)
 - into his hands, his discretion our eternal destinies and future has been placed
- He is not just one who created the world and handed it on, but who inherits everything.

Jesus is Miles Better!!

- From pre-history, through history and on into eternity, Jesus is miles better, miles greater, miles more powerful, more loving, more creative, altogether more lovely and amazing:
- **From pre-history**
 - Jesus is the Son who is God
 - Jesus is the Son who created
- **Through history**
 - Jesus is the Son who speaks/communicates
 - Jesus is the Son who forgives
- **And into eternity**
 - Jesus is the Son who completes
 - Jesus is the Son who inherits
- If all of that leaves you breathless - it should!
- That's the Lord we worship.
- That's the one we serve.
- That's the one who promised he would never leave us nor desert us!
- Jesus, "the exact representation of [God's] being", Jesus, God's Son.
- That's the one who called us to follow him.
- That's the one who called us to tell others of him:
 - and you can see why they'd want to hear, why they need to hear
 - that the creator of the universe loves them!
 - that the "one whom God has chosen to possess all things at the end" calls them to follow him
 - that the judge of all the earth has achieved forgiveness for the sins of mankind
 - if they will but turn in repentance to him
- Jesus really is "Miles Better"!

Response - Faith

- Perhaps you've never really realised just who Jesus is - admired, respected, followed along with his disciples - but never bowed the knee and worshipped, knowing your guilt, your shame before this awesome God.
- If that's the case, you need to take that step of faith - confessing your sin and your need for Jesus' forgiveness and Lordship in your life.
- 1 John 1:9 contains this promised: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just

and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

- Try Jesus out - you'll find his promise is true, and he'll never let you down.

Response - Discipleship

- Perhaps you have taken that step in the past, acknowledged Jesus' Lordship, known the glorious freedom of his forgiveness - but you've allowed that first love to grow faint - you've forgotten how much he meant to you, just who he is.
 - Maybe you feel somewhat ashamed this evening, in the light of this reminder of just who Jesus really is.
 - Jesus is just as faithful in forgiving us as we turn to him now as he ever was.
 - He is just as willing to take us back - he longs that we return, that we re-dedicate our lives to him.
 - Don't hold back - plunge again into the adventure of following Jesus with your whole heart, your whole mind, your whole strength.
 - In fact, even if our commitment is still strong and clear, we all continually need to re-dedicate ourselves to the service of our living, loving Lord!
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- May we be caught up with him, our minds filled with awe and wonder and love and worship and service for Jesus, God's Son, our Lord and Saviour.