

Fact Sheet for **“We Do Have a Great Savior”** **Hebrews 1:1-4**

Pastor Bob Singer
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I have always worked here to teach two disciplines in handling the Bible... how to interpret well and how to apply well. If you don't interpret well you can put words in God's mouth that were never in God's mouth. Then your application of those passages can actually do damage to your own and other's lives. Here are some examples.

If you skip over the different ways that this word “healed” is used in the OT, and you miss the context of Isaiah 53:5, then you can read physical healing into this verse. Then if Christians are sick they have no faith, they're sinning, or possibly just deluded.

If you miss the OT thought that every charge needs to have at least two or three witnesses to be validated (a thought consistent with the context of Matthew 18) then you can wrongly apply Matthew 18:20 to any prayer. But does this mean that if I am praying with two or more then I am more likely to get what I am asking for than if I am praying alone?

If we interpret 1 Corinthians 11:23-25 woodenly without comparing them with all of Scripture then we have a problem. Do the bread and the cup then turn into the actual body and blood of Christ during communion? Then Christ's sacrifice for sins on the cross would not have been sufficient enough and we are again sacrificing Him at every communion service. The book of Hebrews has something to say about this.

Too often passages in the book of Hebrews are too quickly applied without the careful interpretive study to base those applications on. There is some great theology that comes out of this book. Our view of Jesus greatly expands with its words. There are some wonderful applications that are found within these 13 chapters. But we need to begin with careful interpretation.

Who wrote this book? Only God knows. There is no reference to the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70, so this book was likely written before then.

Pay attention to the title... “To the Hebrews”. “There are 29 direct quotations from the Old Testament plus 53 clear allusions to various other passages.”¹ The word “God” is used 68 times in this book, an average about once every 73 words. This book was clearly addressed to Jewish-Christians. To correctly understand this book you have to read it from that Jewish-Christian perspective, not a Gentile-Christian one. In addition, the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew OT) is used exclusively for quotations. This would be unexpected the intended readers were in and around Jerusalem. Then you would expect the OT quotations to be from Hebrew. There is a good chance that the intended readers were in Italy (consider 13:24). There is a verse at the end of this book that is consistent with its contents (13:22). Notice the two words “brothers” and “exhortation”. It seems then that this letter was written to strengthen the faith of Jewish-Christians in Italy who were beginning to second-guess their faith in Jesus Christ.

This morning I want to take a look at the first four verses. They are about Jesus Christ. We have those famous paintings of Jesus with His arms outstretched, and Jesus with the little children. But if our view of Him stops there we are missing so much.

ESV ¹ **Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God (the Father) spoke to our fathers (forefathers, OT believers in general) by the prophets,** ² **but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son,**

¹ Ryrie Study Bible, New American Standard, p. 1943.

Just think about all the times the prophets of the OT spoke to Israel.

To Moses in the burning bush (Exod. 3:2ff.)

To Elijah in a still, small voice (1 Kings 19:12ff.)

To Isaiah in a vision in the temple (Isa. 6:1ff.)

To Hosea in his family circumstances (Hos. 1:2)

To Amos in a basket of summer fruit (Amos 8:1)

But the author of Hebrews writes **but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son**. Jesus is more than just another person through whom God has spoken, He is, and always will be, the preeminent way God has spoken.

Whom (the Son) he (the Father) appointed the heir of all things,

This brings to mind a series of verses by Paul (Phil. 2:5-11).

through whom (the Son) also he (the Father) created the world.

Compare this to John 1:3.

The world – literally “the universe”

This goes far beyond those famous paintings I mentioned earlier.

³ **He (the Son) is the radiance of the glory of God (the Father) and the exact imprint of his (the Father's) nature,**

exact imprint - *χαράκτις* (khar-ak-tare') This word is used only here in the NT. It originally meant *engraver* or *engraving tool*; and it is used figuratively of Christ in relation to God *exact representation, precise reproduction, impress*

These words are strong assertions of the deity of Jesus Christ (compare also John 1:14, 18; 14:8-9).

and he (the Son) upholds the universe (literally “all things”) by the word of his (the Son's own) power.

I still have many questions about this.

After making purification for sins, he (the Son) sat down at the right hand of the Majesty (the Father) on high,

And Christ being seated indicates the finished sense of His once-for-all sacrifice for sin (see 10:12).

⁴ **having become as much superior to angels as the name he (the Son) has inherited is more excellent than theirs.**

Jesus is superior to the prophets and superior to the angles.

Jesus Christ, our Savior is not merely the loving and accepting Savior with open arms and who loves the little children.

He certainly is those things, but He is also...

The preeminent revelation of God

The heir of everything

The one through whom everything was created

God's Son and God the Son

The one who upholds all things

And the once-for all sacrifice for sins

We do have a great Savior!

Take stock of your relationship with Christ. Where do you stand?