

WHITE NOISE

"TUNING IN TO THE FREQUENCY OF GOD'S VOICE"

HEBREWS 1:1-4

This Week's Core Competency

Trinity – I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

2 Corinthians 13:14 *May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*

What does Islam teach regarding Jesus?

"Despite the fact that the account of Jesus' life is filled with extraordinary miracles, and the titles for Jesus are very complementary, the Qur'anic verdict concerning his identity is clearly summarized in 5:78, 'Christ the son of Mary Was no more than An Apostle; many were The apostles that passed away Before him. His mother Was a woman of truth. They had both to eat Their (daily) food.' Both the Qur'an and the universal opinion of Muslims vehemently insist that Jesus is not the divine Son of God. The Qur'an is filled with verses that speak against the idea of God begetting a son" (Norman L. Geisler and Abdul Saleeb, *Answering Islam*, 62). In fact, belief in the deity of Jesus and by extension the Trinity amounts to the greatest of all sins in Islam, the sin of *shirk* (18).

While the deity of Jesus is flatly denied in the Qur'an, it is unequivocally affirmed in the New Testament. In fact, it is the very heart of biblical Christianity. One writer puts it this way, "One of the most controversial topics of Christian

The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being.

— Hebrews 1:3

theology is the deity of Christ. It is at the same time one of the most crucial. It lies at the heart of our faith. For our faith rests on Jesus' actually being God in human flesh, and not simply an extraordinary human, albeit the most unusual person who ever lived" (Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2:683).

The book of Hebrews is most emphatic regarding Jesus' divinity. In the opening chapter, he is shown to be superior to angels. Among other things, he is said to be "the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being" (v. 3), one about whom God says, "Let all God's angels worship him" (v. 6) and to whom God himself says, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever." He is the one who "laid the foundations of the earth" (v. 10) whose "years will never end" (v. 12).

Hebrews 1 unmistakably ascribes deity to the Son. That being the case, belief in one God must be understood in such a way as to accommodate the affirmation of Jesus' deity—that Jesus is God as well as the Father. The doctrine of the Trinity, which reached its final formulation in the fourth century in Augustine's *De Trinitate*, does just that. He wrote, "We believe that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one God, maker and ruler of every creature, and that 'Father' is not 'Son,' nor 'Holy Spirit' 'Father' or 'Son'; but a Trinity of mutually related persons, and a unity of equal essence." A contemporary theologian defines the Trinity this way, "In the one living and true God there are three coeternal and coequal Persons, the same in substance but distinct in existence" (Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 632).

day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God’s word to put yourself in touch with him.

Hebrews 1:1-4

1 In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. 3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. 4 So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.

Cf., other translations

1 Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. 3 He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, 4 having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. (ESV)

1 In the past God spoke to our ancestors many times and in many ways through the prophets, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us through his Son. He is the one through whom God created the universe, the one whom God has chosen to possess all things at the end. 3 He reflects the brightness of God's glory and is the exact likeness of God's own being, sustaining the universe with his powerful word. After achieving forgiveness for the sins of all human beings, he sat down in heaven at the right side of God, the Supreme Power. 4 The Son was made greater than the angels, just as the name that God gave him is greater than theirs. (GNT)

EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- * Bracket "at many times" in v. 1.
- * Circle "prophets" in v. 1.
- * Box "but" indicating *contrast* in v. 2.
- * Circle "his" in v. 2.
- * Circle "heir" in v. 2.
- * Highlight "radiance of God's glory" in v. 3a.
- * In a different color, highlight "exact representation of his being" in v. 3a.
- * Underline "sustaining all things" in 3a.
- * Circle "purification" in v. 3b.
- * Circle "sat down" in v. 3b.
- * Circle "Majesty" in v. 3b.
- * Box "so" indicating *result* in v. 4.
- * Box "as much" and "as" indicating *comparison* in v. 4.

day **2**

EXPLORE – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. Hebrews opens with a fourfold *contrast*. Identify the two eras, recipients, agents, and ways contrasted in 1:1, 2.

2. Identify the *subject* of verses 1-2 and the *subject* verses 3-4.

3. What does the *contrast* introduced in verse 2 imply about God's past revelation?

4. Put what "appointed heir of all things" means in your own words.

5. What do "radiance of God's glory" and "exact representation of his being" imply regarding the Son?

6. The Son "made the universe" (v. 2). Describe his continuing interest in it.

7. What does the fact that the Son "sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven" indicate to you?

8. Explain the *comparison* in verse 4.

9. **Discussion:** Since the Son is not named in Hebrews 1, discuss what makes you think he is Jesus.

day 3

EXAMINE – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

On the beauty and structure of the opening to the book of Hebrews, one commentator writes: "Because Hebrews begins like a sermon, without any mention of sender, addresses, or words of greeting, the author opens with a majestic overture, rhetorically eloquent and theologically packed. This beautifully constructed opening statement begins by contrasting the revelation given under the older testament economy with that given under the new. This contrast focuses on and climaxes in the person of God's Son—heir, agent of creation, sustainer of the universe, Savior, and sovereign—who now sits at the right hand of God.

"Although most translations, including the NIV, present this introduction in several sentences, Hebrews 1:1-4 in Greek forms a single, multiclausal sentence, built around the main clause 'God . . . has spoken.' Thus God and his communication to humanity through the Son engage the author's attention from the first. These beautifully crafted verses fall into two main subdivisions, the first addressing divine revelation (1:1-2a) and the second the person, work, and status of God's Son (1:2b-4)" (George H. Guthrie, *The NIV Application Commentary: Hebrews*, 45).

The subject of verses 1-2a is God. In these verses the writer contrasts four areas: 1) the *eras* of God's revelation—"in the past" vs. "in these last days;" 2) the *recipients* of God's revelation—"our forefathers" vs. "us;" 3) the *agents* of God's revelation—"the prophets" vs. "his Son;" and 4) the *ways* of God's revelation—"various ways" vs. one way (implied). The point of the contrasts is simple enough. God's past revelation through the prophets, while progressive, came "piecemeal." And although it was expansive, it was, nevertheless, incomplete. In other words, it pales in comparison to God's present revelation through the effulgence of his Son. One expositor puts it this way, "He [the writer to the Hebrews] surveys the revelation granted through the prophets in its variety and fullness but implies that until the coming of the Son the revelation of God remained incomplete" (William L. Lane, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 47a, *Hebrews 1-8*, 10). No doubt, when the writer referred to "prophets," he had more than the writing prophets of the Old Testament in mind.

The subject of verses 2b-4 is the Son. In little more than two verses, the writer makes seven statements about him. First, God appointed the Son heir of all

things. In a nutshell, all of creation belongs to him, but not because he "inherited" it in the typical way but because God granted him possession of it. One commentator explains it this way: "The term points to lawful possession but without indicating in what way that possession is secured. 'Heir of all things,' then, is a title of dignity and shows that Christ has the supreme place in all the mighty universe" (Leon Morris, *Hebrews*," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 12:13).

Second, God made the universe through the Son. The Son was the Father's agent in creation. Paul says as much in 1 Corinthians 8:6, "Yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live." Interestingly, the word translated "universe" ("worlds," ESV) is literally "ages." According to a note in the NET Bible, "the temporal (ages) came to be used of the spatial (what exists in those time periods). See Heb 11:3 for the same usage."

Third, God's glory shines forth from the Son. Jesus is either the outshining of the brightness of God's glory or the reflection of that glory. In either case the glory of God is evident in him. Consider the following illustration. "One cannot separate the experience of looking at the brightness of a light from seeing the light itself because they are too closely associated. By analogy, to see the Son is to view God's glory or manifest presence" (Guthrie, 48).

Fourth, the Son is the perfect impression of God's being, or as the RSV puts it, he "bears the very stamp of his nature." "Exact representation" translates the Greek word, *charakter*, which occurs only here in the New Testament. Originally it denoted an instrument for engraving and then a mark stamped on that instrument. It was used literally to refer to the impression on coins. So just as a "proof" coin is the exact representation of the die used to strike it, so also is the Son the exact representation of God. What the Son represents is the 'being' of the Father, that is, his essential nature.

Fifth, the Son sustains "all things." The universe in its totality, the universe taken as one whole, is in view; nothing is excluded from the scope of the Son's sustaining activity. As one expositor aptly says, "The author pictures the Son as in the first instance active

in creation [v. 2b] and then as continuing his interest in the world he loves and bearing it onward towards the fulfilment of the divine plan" (Morris, 14).

Sixth, the Son provided cleansing from sins. The writer to the Hebrews has a number of ways of referring to what the Son has done about sins. "The Savior made a propitiation for sins (2:17). He put sins away so that God remembers them no more (8:12; 10:17). He bore sin (9:28), he offered a sacrifice (*thysia*) for sins (10:12), he made an offering (*prophora*) for sin (10:18), and brought

about remission of sin (10:18). He annulled sin by his sacrifice (9:26). He brought about redemption from transgressions (9:15) . . . Whatever had to be done about sin he has done it" (14-15).

Seventh, the Son is seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high. After providing purification for sins, following his resurrection, God exalted him to the place of highest honor (cf., Ps 110:1). Sitting is the posture of rest, and the right hand the place of honor. So he is superior to the angels in that just as his name, Son of God, is superior to their name, angels, so also is he is superior to them.

The Message of the Passage

God has spoken to us in these last days by his Son—incarnate deity, heir, agent of creation, sustainer of the universe, Savior, and sovereign—who now sits exalted at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you in his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James teaches in James 1:22. Reflect on 3 "living questions" to apply what you have learned this week.

- **Journal your answers to the following living questions:**

–How is God making himself known to you?

–How does God want to change you?

–How is God calling you to change your world?

notes STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

- v. 1 **past** "The eras mentioned contrast two time frames. The time 'in the past' (or 'formerly') refers to the time prior to the coming of Messiah, and correspondingly, the coming time was seen as initiating 'the last days.' The author uses the adjective 'these' (*touton*) in verse 2, expressing the Christian conviction that the last days have been initiated already" (Guthrie, 46).
- v. 1 **forefathers** "The expression is usually translated 'fathers' and is normally used in the NT of the patriarchs (cf. KJV, John 7:22; Rom 9:5, et al.), but here the contrast to 'us' in v.2 shows that the term 'forefathers' is a shorthand way of referring to OT believers in general" (Morris, 12:12).
- v. 1 **many, various** The two words translated "at many times" and "in various ways" suggest that "until the coming of the Son the revelation of God remained incomplete" (Lane, 10). "As to the manner of the divine revelation, it was 'at many times' (*polymeros*)—that is, it was temporally fragmented rather than in a complete package—and 'in various ways' (*polytopos*), a word that suggests the diversity of forms of that revelation. This suggestion brings to mind Old Testament commands, exhortations, stories, visions, dreams, mighty acts, breathtaking theophanies, and a still small voice, to name a few" (Guthrie, 46).
- v. 2 **his Son** "It is noteworthy that in the Greek there is no article or possessive; there is nothing corresponding to NIV's 'his.' In essence the writer is saying God spoke 'in one who has the quality of being Son.' It is the Son's essential nature that is stressed. This stands in contrast to 'the prophets' in the preceding verse. The consummation of the revelatory process, the definitive revelation, took place when . . . the very Son of God came" (Morris, 13). "The emphasis here is on the unique relationship of Jesus with the Father—one who relates to him as son . . . the bearer of God's word for the last days was uniquely qualified for the responsibility" (Guthrie, 47).
- v. 2 **heir** Cf., Ps 2:8. In the sense that God's Son will "possess all things at the end" (TEV). "By his Son, God created the world in the beginning, and it will all belong to the Son at the end" (*The Message*). By designating his Son "heir of all things" God has placed him in a position of authority over all things (J. Dwight Pentecost, *A Faith that Endures*, 39). "In Hebrews the Son is invested as the universal heir of all creation (not merely of all the nations, as in Gen 17:5 and Ps 2:8)" (Lane, 12).
- v. 3 **radiance** The opening clause contains two parallel declarations regarding the Son. The use of synonymous parallelism indicates they are meant to say the same thing (Lane, 13). Glory, i.e., "splendor" or "intense brightness," is evidence of God's person and presence. Being the "radiance of God's glory" implies the deity of the Son and "emphasizes the oneness of the Son with His Father" (Pentecost, 41; see Jn 10:30). "As the radiance of his glory' the Son is the manifestation of the person and presence of God (e.g., Luke 9:32; John 1:14; 2:11; 17:5; Rom. 8:17; 1 Cor. 2:8; Phil. 3:21; 2 Thess. 2:14)" (Guthrie, 48).
- v. 3 **exact representation** The Greek word, *charakter*, used only here in the NT. It originally referred to an engraving tool and later to the impression made by the tool. "For example, it could refer to the impression made on coins. The word thus speaks of the feature of an object or person by which we are able to recognize it for what it is" (Guthrie, 48). "Jesus is not merely an image or reflection of God. Because the Son himself is God, he is the absolutely authentic representation of God's being (cf. Jn 14:9; Col 1:15" (*The NIV Study Bible*, note on 1:3, 1859).
- v. 3 **being** A reference to God's essential nature, i.e., his substance or essence. The expression "exact representation of his being" parallels other expressions that refer to Jesus as the "form," "likeness," or "image" of God (see Jn 1:2; Php 2:6; Col 1:15).
- v. 3 **sustaining all things** "This is not the idea of the Son holding up the weight of the world as the mighty Atlas of Greek mythology, but rather the dynamic progression of creation through his governmental power" (Guthrie, 48). "The author pictures the Son as in the first instance active in creation and then as continuing his interest in the world he loves and bearing it onward towards the fulfillment of the divine plan" (Morris, 14).
- v. 3 **purification** "The word 'purification' (*katharismos*) is most often used in the NT of ritual cleansing (e.g., Mark 1:44), but here (and in 2 Peter 1:9) it refers to the removal of sin. It also points to the defiling aspect of sin. Sin stains. But Christ has effected a complete cleansing" (Morris, 15).
- v. 3 **right hand** Cf., Ps 110:1. "The concept of enthronement at God's right hand would convey to contemporaries an impression of the Son's royal power and unparalleled glory . . . Christians were familiar with the notion of the Son's session at God's right hand from creedal confessions and hymns. They would recognize immediately that the reference was to Christ's exaltation after his resurrection" (Lane, 16)
- v. 3 **Majesty in heaven** The expression "constitutes a reverential periphrasis for 'God' commonly used in Jewish circles of the day" (Guthrie, 49).

Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

Recently I walked into my 14-year-old's bedroom to ask him a question and collect his laundry. He was lying on his bed with his homework in front of him. I began picking up laundry, telling him what I needed him to know and then asked him a question. No response. I then noticed he had his earbuds in and was listening to his iPod. He hadn't even seen me walk into the room. I gently touched him on the leg to get his attention. I have never seen that kid move so fast! He jumped off the bed and tumbled into the floor. "Why did you do that?" he gasped. "I was talking to you and was just trying to get your attention." I wonder how often God would say that to us. How often is He talking to us and we are not listening or paying attention? I want to hear God speak. I want my kids to hear Him speak as well. To hear Him, I first need to know Him. I need to be in a relationship with Him. Second, I have to talk to Him. My prayer life should be rich and consistent. Third, I have to be intentionally still before Him and actively listen. Let's encourage each other to model a healthy prayer life for our kids so they grow up to be mighty prayer warriors!

What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Read Hebrews 1:1-4

1. How did God speak to people in the past?
2. According to verse 2, how does He speak now?
3. Where is Jesus now?

What Do You Think

"The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being" (v. 3). How does knowing Jesus help us know God?

What R U Going To Do

Find a quiet place. Take only your Bible, a journal (paper) and a pen. Ask God to speak to you and then sit quietly for a few minutes. You can read your Bible too! Write down any thoughts you have and share them with your parents! You are learning to listen to God!

MEMORY TIME

Core Comp

Trinity - I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Memory Verse

Hebrews 1:3a - *The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.*

KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized CC _____ and Verse _____. Family completed **Say** _____ **Think** _____ **Do** _____

Child's name _____ Grade _____ Parent's signature _____

Earn 1 token by completing the PantegoKids Bible study and another token by reciting the memory verse.
Questions: Kids@pantego.org

30 CORE COMPETENCIES

10 CORE BELIEFS

Trinity 2 Corinthians 13:14

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation By Grace Ephesians 2:8-9

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible 2 Timothy 3:16-17

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God Psalm 121:1-2

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ John 1:12

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church Ephesians 4:15-16

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity John 3:16

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion Psalm 82:3-4

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity John 14:1-4

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship 1 Timothy 6:17-19

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES

Worship Psalm 95:1-7

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer Psalm 66:16-20

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study Hebrews 4:12

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness Matthew 6:33

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts Romans 12:4-6

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community Acts 2:44-47

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time Colossians 3:17

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith Ephesians

6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life Romans 12:1

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 CORE VIRTUES

Joy John 15:11

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace Philippians 4:6-7

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

Faithfulness Proverbs 3:3-4

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Self-Control Titus 2:11-13

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility Philippians 2:3, 4

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love 1 John 4:10-12

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience Proverbs 14:29

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness 1 Thess. 5:15

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness Philippians 4:5

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope Hebrews 6:19-20

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

About the Authors

Tom Bulick (M.A. in Educational Leadership, Eastern Michigan University, Th.M. in Old Testament, and Ph.D. in Bible Exposition, Dallas Theological Seminary). For more than forty years, Tom has served as pastor, faculty member, and administrator. Tom was Vice President for Student Life and Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Trinity Western University (Vancouver, B.C.) for twelve years before accepting the position of Spiritual Formation Pastor at Pantego Bible Church in 1998. He and his wife Ruth have been married more than forty-five years and have one son, Zach.

Wendy Hollabaugh (B.S.W. University of Texas at Arlington) is the Children's Minister at Pantego Bible Church. Wendy has over ten years of experience in Children's Ministry. She has a passion for leading families to connect with God and each other. She enjoys creating compelling environments where kids fall in love with God and His Truth. Wendy and her husband, Greg, are also involved in their own personal youth ministry as they are training their three teenagers, Hannah, Aaron and Noah.



8001 Anderson Blvd.
Ft. Worth, TX 76120
1-866-PANTEGO
Fax 817-275-6403
www.pantego.org

The mission of THE SCROLLS is to help you become a growing disciple changed by God to change your world through your own active reading of the Bible. Send any questions or comments you may have about this lesson to Dr. Tom Bulick. His e-mail address is tbulick@pantego.org.