

SOLA CHRISTUS

"IN CHRIST ALONE"

TEXT: HEBREWS 1:1 - 4

SERMON POINTS

1. JESUS IS THE ULTIMATE PROPHET - TEACHING US ALL WE NEED TO KNOW

- Read Hebrews 4:1-4

Before Jesus came, God called individuals to speak on his behalf. There was usually one for the time period, and this same person would convey specific instructions or warnings to God's people. In establishing a people for himself, God chose Moses as a prophet to instruct the Israelites on how to approach and worship him, and how to be his people. Without God communicating that truth to Moses, the people would not have entered into covenant relationship with him. They were completely reliant on God to send a prophet to communicate his truth to them. In addition, prophets did the following 5 things:

- i. They spoke up for the outcasts.
- ii. They pointed out religious hypocrisy.
- iii. They brought rebels to repentance.
- iv. They announced new eras.
- v. They predicted the future.

Jesus came as the final prophet, ultimately revealing who God was and how God was to save humanity from sin. Jesus is God's full and final revelation of himself. There is nothing more that we need to know that has not been revealed to us in Christ, and there is nothing more that needs to be done to secure our relationship with God. It has all been done in Christ. Not only did Jesus teach the truth, he was and is the truth, which is why we can and must follow him in every area of our lives. We tend to still look to the world for wisdom and truth, forgetting the Jesus spoke the following truth and wisdom to us in scripture:

- That God loves us, which is why he came.
- That the meek will inherit the earth.
- That our enemies are supposed to be loved by us, and our neighbors, and our neighbors aren't people we think they are.
- That we shouldn't worry about tomorrow.
- That we should be his witnesses.
- That without him we can do nothing.
- That the happiest and most content we will ever be is when we abide in him.

Q. What was the role of an Old Testament prophet and why was it so necessary before Christ came?

Q. Why do we say that one of the roles Jesus played in his ministry, was as that of a prophet?

Q. Why was Jesus a different kind of prophet to Moses?

Q. Why is there no other truth on which to base your life, apart from the truth revealed in Christ? (Does this then mean we are not to apply other truths to our life? Explain).

Q. What truths has Jesus already told us, that if believed and embraced, would change our lives significantly? (See the list above).

2. JESUS IS THE ULTIMATE PRIEST - GIVING US CONTINUAL ACCESS TO GOD

- Read Hebrews 10:1-4, Hebrews 7:22-28 & Hebrews 1:3b

Before Jesus came to die for us, God had appointed priests, and set them aside very specifically to be the mediators between himself and the people. The priests had to go through a range of God-directed 'rituals', in order to cleans themselves, before going ahead and making sacrifices on behalf of the people.

The sacrifices were made in order to atone for the sins of the people. They had to do this every year, as sin continued. The sacrifices did not do away with sin, but covered them until the next year. This allowed them to remain in covenant with God. Without the priests, there is no way the people would have been forgiven. So, the priests played a pivotal role in the community of believers. Their role as mediator, foreshadowed the time when Jesus would become the one and only mediator. When Christ died, his blood was shed as the one atoning sacrifice that would please God forever. In doing so, the role of the earthly priest fell away, as there was no longer a need for the yearly sacrifice of animals. Instead of an earthly priest, we now have a permanent High Priest, in Jesus, who is our mediator between God and us. He is the perfect mediator, because he knows and understands the frailness of our humanity. He knows where we are tempted, he knows when we are afraid and he knows what grief and shock feel like because he suffered in so many ways, while he was on earth.

Q. What was the role of the priest in the Old Testament, and why is it that no one else was able to do their job?

Q. What is different about the sacrifices that were used by the priests, and the sacrifice that God used, in putting Jesus to death on the cross?

Q. Why is Jesus called a "sympathetic" high priest and how should this impact our relationship with him?

Q. In what ways do we (as Christians) try and atone for our sin ourselves, and why do you think we do this? (For example, when I sin, and I feel terrible about it the next day, the worse I feel, the more I subconsciously believe that I have done something or shown God that I have tried to sort it out. After a few days, I feel as though there is enough distance between me and the sin, and the guilt starts to wear off, and I then feel lighter – as though I have paid for it with my deeply guilty emotions.)

Q. Why is our atonement for sin found in Christ alone, and why is he our only mediator before God, when we have sinned? How should we then deal with our own sin?

3. JESUS IS THE ULTIMATE KING - RULING AND REINING OVER OUR LIVES

- Read 2 Samuel 7:12-16, Luke 1:30-33, John 3:17, Hebrews 1:3b

God set apart one person to rule over the nation of Israel, in order to govern them politically but also religiously. The king was to obey God in all of his ways and ensure that the way the people lived, followed after God's precepts. Though God wanted the Israelites to follow his rule directly, they insisted on an earthly King. They felt that as a king followed God, they would then follow him, and all would work out ok. In theory this would work, if the king in charge followed God.

But it was inevitable that some kings would be proud and abandon God, and that the people would naturally follow. This was the cycle of Israel's history – the ups and downs of life and faith, based entirely on the good and evil kings that reigned at the time. God raised up some Godly kings, and poured out his favour on their kingdom during their reign. King David was the best of the bunch, because he loved God wholeheartedly. However, as we know from the scriptures, he too was a sinner and made some awful choices, which had significant consequences. But because of his genuine love for God, God chose his line to bring forth the ultimate King, who would rule and reign over God's people for ever. This saving King was promised hundreds of years prior to his arrival. True to the covenant, Jesus was born from the line of David, and he fulfilled the prophecies about his messiahship. Though Christ, God would establish his kingdom which would not be an earthly one, but a spiritual one - where Christ would rule and reign over the hearts of his people.

The Israelites were not the only ones to struggle with the idea of a spiritual kingdom. We too find it difficult to allow Christ to rule over our hearts, because it means that we have to give up full control over them. We do not want to give control over to Jesus, because it means that we will have to make very different decisions.

It will also mean having to change some of our emotions and our responses, because so much of those are governed by our sin and pride. We make everyday decisions based on greed, selfishness, pride, laziness and just our own fleshly desires. But when we are under Christ's rule, we still have those desires, but we submit them to him, and we choose his desires over our own. In submitting to his authority, we die to our own. The great irony is that were designed to follow Christ. So, when we are living in sin, and under our own rule and reign, we are not flourishing and we are not living out of our true identity. Living under God's rule and reign brings us life and peace.

Q. Why do you think the Israelites wanted their own earthly king instead of following God directly?

Q. Why do we struggle to submit our lives entirely to Christ's rule and reign?

Q. In what areas do you find that Christians in our culture do not submit to Christ's rule, but rather make decisions based on worldly wisdom? *(For example-gluttony: we are told that gluttony is a sin, and yet most Christians in wealthy environments overindulge regularly, and then spend hours in the gym trying to get rid of the evidence. We have low fat/carb-free/banting etc. everything, so we can still eat and drink too much, without looking fat. Or, we do not give to the poor because we overindulge on our own level of comfortable living. In both of these areas, we know what Jesus has said. It is clear in scripture, but we want comfort to rule, rather than Christ, and so we turn to the world who gives us the philosophical answer that we like, and we choose and submit to that instead).*

Q. Make this question personal: In what area of your own life are you currently not submitting to Christ's rule, but are rather making your own choices based on worldly wisdom?