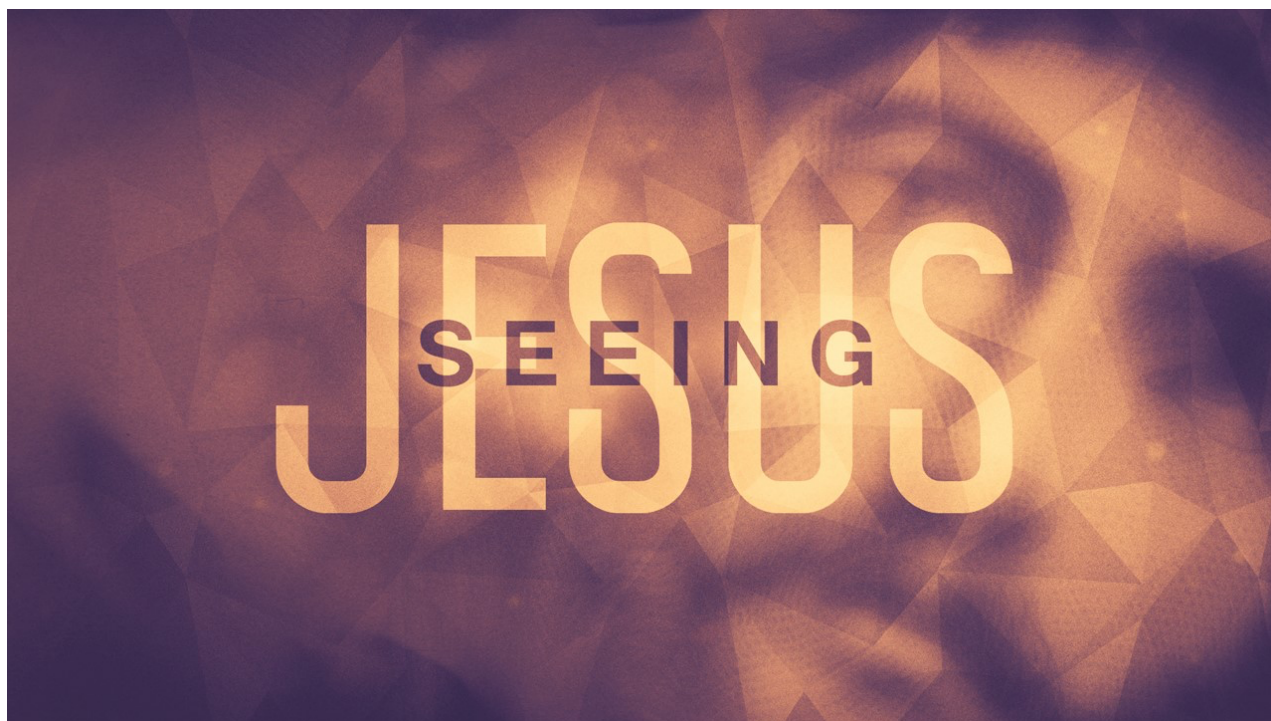




IN THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS

At Christ's Table ~ ACTpublications

"Explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words."

1 Corinthians 2:13

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This is an expository study of the Letter to the Hebrews.¹

However, it does not cover every verse in the letter, but rather, goes deeply into key verses, focusing on the goal of **SEEING JESUS**. (John 12:21)

Jesus is the Word of God

1“God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, **2**in these last days has spoken to us in *His Son*, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom He also made the world.” Hebrews 1:1-2

“God ... has spoken to us in His Son.”

6“And without faith it is impossible to please *Him*, for the one who comes to God must believe that He exists, and *that* He proves to be One who rewards those who seek Him.”

Hebrews 11:6

As believers, we hold the following Faith Presuppositions:

- God exists.
- God responds to those who seek Him.

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from the *New American Standard Bible*. Comments on words and grammar in the original languages are based on material in: *Word Pictures in the New Testament* by A.T. Robertson, *Word Studies* by Marvin Vincent, *Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words* by W.E. Vine, *Word Studies in the Greek New Testament* by Kenneth Wuest, *The Complete Word Study New Testament* by Spiros Zodhiates.

- “God has spoken” That is, God has revealed Himself – in creation (Psalm 19), “through the prophets” (Hebrews 1:1; specifically, through the Scriptures); and finally, and completely, through His Son. (Hebrews 1:2)

This is something which the Son said (about the Spirit of Truth):

12“I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* at the present time. **13**But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. **14**He will glorify Me, for He will take from Mine and will disclose *it* to you. **15**All things that the Father has are Mine; this is why I said that He takes from Mine and will disclose *it* to you.” John 16:12-15

Is it correct to conclude that God also speaks through the Holy Spirit? Yes. But what does the Holy Spirit have to say?

“... whatever He hears He will speak ... He will take of mine and disclose it to you....” (v. 13) “He will testify about Me.” (John 15:26) “... He will bring to your remembrance all that I said to you....” (John 14:26) Why is this significant or important? We need to know this in order to discern the true gifts of the Spirit and in

order to discern prophecy. “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” (Revelation 19:10)

Jesus is “*God’s Last Word to Man*” (G. Campbell Morgan).

Everything God has to speak and reveal to humanity He has done so in Christ. The Holy Spirit has nothing “new” to reveal to humanity. He has been given to reveal Christ and to “guide you into all the truth”; “as [all] Truth is in Jesus [embodied and personified in Him]” (Ephesians 4:21 AMP; Cf. Colossians 2:3)

1“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” John 1:1

The “Word”, the “Logos” is God’s complete and ultimate message to humanity.

4“And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us; and we saw His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.” John 1:14

“God ... has spoken to us in His Son” (Hebrews 1:1-2) Jesus’ life on the earth – all that He was, all that He did, all that He said, and all that was recorded in the Scriptures about Him – was God’s ultimate message to humanity – God’s full and final revelation of Himself.

The Uniqueness of Jesus

17“By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and the one who had received the promises was offering up his only *son*.” Hebrews 11:17

Abraham had three wives and eight sons (Genesis 21 & 25); but Isaac was UNIQUE in that he was the only “son of promise”. (Galatians 4:28) Hebrews 2:10 says that “many sons are being brought to glory”; but Jesus is a UNIQUE Son of God.

In the NKJV (Textus Receptus) we find the phrase, “the only begotten from the Father” in John 1:14, and “the only begotten Son” in John 1:18. Both are identifying Jesus – the Logos / the Word (v. 1). John’s point in using the term “only begotten” was that this One is UNIQUE. In vv. 12-13 John says that **all** human beings who believe are “born of God” and are “children of God”. But Jesus is a UNIQUE human being in that He is *both* God and Man – no other human being is God.

He is UNIQUE in that He is the only human being without sin. (Hebrews 4:15) He is UNIQUE in that only He is in the “bosom of the Father” and therefore only He can “explain” (Greek: *exegeomai*, Strong’s # 1834) “the God that no one has seen”.

Jesus is the Heir of All Things

“In these last days has spoken to us in *His Son*, whom He appointed heir of all things.” Hebrews 1:2a

“Whom he appointed heir of all things”: In His pre-incarnate state as God, or even as the Son of God, Jesus had no need to be appointed an heir, for He is one with the Father, the Creator and Owner of all things. Being “appointed heir of all things” had to do with His Incarnation, when He became “the Son of Man” through a human birth, death and resurrection. The Christ, the Anointed and Appointed One, had to identify with His subjects and brothers, whom He came to redeem. His Messianic sovereignty is something He acquired, not because of His equality with God, but because of His identification with Humanity as “the Son of Man”.

Upon His resurrection, Jesus said: “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth” (Matthew 28:18) We can understand this to be referring to His authority as the Christ, the Appointed and Anointed Messiah – after “He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.” Hebrews 1:3b These verses imply that, while Christ’s messiahship was announced at His birth, it was fulfilled only after His crucifixion resurrection and ascension.

“Through Whom also he made the world (ages).” Hebrews 1:2b

In his *Word Studies*, Marvin Vincent explains that Christ was not merely a mere “instrument” or passive “tool” in creation, but rather a cooperating agent. To more fully understand this, we need to consider this along with similar statements made by the apostles John and Paul:

“All things came into being THROUGH Him” John 1:2

“For BY Him (or IN Him) all things were created ... all things have been created THROUGH Him and FOR Him.” Colossians 1:16

Frederic Louis Godet explains: *“Every being, to reach existence, must have passed through the thought and will of the Logos.... All the laws and purposes which guide the creation and government of the universe reside in Him, the Eternal Word, as their meeting-point.”*

Jesus is the Radiance of God’s Glory

“And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power.” Hebrews 1:3a

When we see Jesus, we have a revelation of “the radiance (Robertson & Vincent: “effulgence” or “out-raying”) of the (Father’s) glory and the exact representation of the (Father’s) nature or substance.” (Greek” *hupostasis*, Strong’s # 5287; Cf.

Hebrews 11:1) *Essentially God's ATTRIBUTES are God's "glory".*
(Cf. Exodus 33:18-23)

Jesus is the "Better Thing"

Since the word "better" appears 12 times in the Letter to the Hebrews, and the words "more excellent" appears 3 times in the letter (Strong's # s 1313 & 4119 in 1:4, 8:6 & 11:4 respectively), the Letter to the Hebrews is often called the "Book of Better Things". The Greek word translated "better" is *kreisson*, literally meaning stronger or more powerful in activity and effect. (W.E. Vine, Strong's # 2909)

"But, beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you, and things that accompany salvation...." Hebrews 6:9

"... because God had provided something better for us...."
Hebrews 11:40

The Letter to the Hebrews continually points to **Jesus as the "Better Thing":**

Jesus is a Better Prophet

“God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son....” Hebrews 1:1-2

“Spoke” (“in the prophets”) and “has spoken” (“in his Son”) both have the same verb, Greek” *laleo* (Strong’s # 2980), aorist indicative tense – indicating completed revelation. This is to say, God completed everything He desired to say through the Old Testament prophets. And then, in His Son, Jesus Christ, He completed everything He desired to communicate to humanity. Now this doesn’t mean that He is no longer speaking. It means that there isn’t anything *additional* beyond Christ that God has to communicate. What He continues to speak through teaching and prophesying is for the purpose of *revealing more and more of the Mystery of Christ* which He has already spoken of and recorded in the Scripture. That is, to help us SEE MORE OF JESUS.

Concerning the phrase, “in His Son”: There is no pronoun (“His”) in the text. With the phrase, “the prophets”, the writer is referring to a group of people; but with the phrase, “a Son”, he is referring to the relationship between the Father and the Son. What the Son is capable of revealing is **“better than”** what the prophets were

capable of revealing. There is a similar usage in other places in the Letter to the Hebrews:

“But Christ *was faithful* as a Son over His house—whose house we are, if we hold firmly to our confidence and the boast of our hope.” Hebrews 3:6

“Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered.” Hebrews 5:8

“For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak, but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, *appoints* a Son, who has been made perfect forever.” Hebrews 7:28

Jesus is a Better Messenger

“... having become as much better than the angels (Greek: *aggelos*, Strong’s # 32, messengers), as He has inherited a more excellent name than they.” Hebrews 1:4

The “name” (Greek: *onomah*, Strong’s # 3686) speaks of the nature and authority of the person. As the Model Messenger, Jesus said: “I did not speak on My own initiative, but the father Himself who sent Me has given me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak.” (John 12:49, Cf. 7:16, 8:26 & 28, 14:10 & 24, 17:8)

Jesus is a Better Hope

“(for the Law made nothing perfect), and on the other hand there is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.” Hebrews 7:19

That “better hope” is specifically being able to draw near to God.

18“So that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to hold firmly to the hope set before us. 19This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and reliable and one which enters within the veil, 20where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.” Hebrews 6:18-20

Under the Old Covenant, only the high priest could enter the Most Holy Place, once a year on the Day of Atonement. But all those who are “in Christ”, our High Priest (Hebrews 4:14-15, 5:5-6, 7:21-22), can “draw near with confidence to the throne of grace”. (Hebrews 4:16).

Jesus is a Better Covenant

“... so much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.” Hebrews 7:22

According to a prophecy through Isaiah, Jesus is not only “the guarantee of a better covenant” – *He IS the covenant* – the New Covenant: **“I will appoint You as a covenant to the people, as a light to the nations.”** Isaiah 43:6

A Better Ministry, a Better Covenant, and Better Promises

“But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises.” Hebrews 8:6

(Cf. Hebrews 8:7-13)

In his *Commentary on the Bible*, this is what Adam Clarke had to say about Christ's better ministry, covenant and promises:

“God promised to the Jewish nation certain secular blessings, peculiar to that nation, on condition of their keeping the law of Moses; but under the new covenant he promises pardon of sin, and final salvation to all mankind, on condition of believing on Jesus Christ, and walking in his testimonies. The Jewish priests, fallible, dying men, were mediators of the old covenant, by means of their sacrifices, which could not take away sin, nor render the comers thereunto perfect. But Jesus Christ, who liveth forever, who is infinite in wisdom and power, by the sacrifice of

himself has established this new covenant, and by the shedding of his blood has opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.”

Jesus is a Better Sacrifice

“By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks.” Hebrews 11:4

Abel’s sacrifice – which resulted in his shed blood and death - was *“only* a shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.” (Colossians 2:17)

“Therefore, it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.” Hebrews 9:23

A Better Possession in Jesus

“For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one.”

Hebrews 10:34

The Greek word translated “possession” is *huparxis*. (Strong’s # 5223) meaning subsistence, substance, possessions. The

Hebrews lost their earthly possessions, but gained heavenly treasure, an eternal inheritance (Hebrews 9:15).

“But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.” Hebrews 11:16

The “city prepared for them” is an eternal city. (Hebrews 13:14)
They believed the messianic that when the Lord comes, his reward will be with Him. (Isaiah 40:10, 62:11; Revelation 22:12) In fact, as the Lord promised Abraham, the Lord Himself is the “exceeding great reward”. (Genesis 15:1)

A Better Resurrection in Jesus

“Women received back their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection.” Hebrews 11:35

This was not a resurrection to a slightly extended life on earth, but a resurrection to eternal life. When you have Jesus, you have “the resurrection and the life”. (John 11:25, 1 John 5:12)

Better Blood in Jesus

“... and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.”

Hebrews 12:24

What does it mean that Jesus’ blood “speaks better than the blood of Abel”? While Abel had a “better sacrifice” than Cain (Hebrews 11:4), Jesus offered a “better sacrifice” than Abel. Abel’s blood cried out from the ground for vengeance upon his murderer. (Genesis 4:10) Jesus’ blood speaks eternally from the cross of God’s mercy, forgiveness and love.

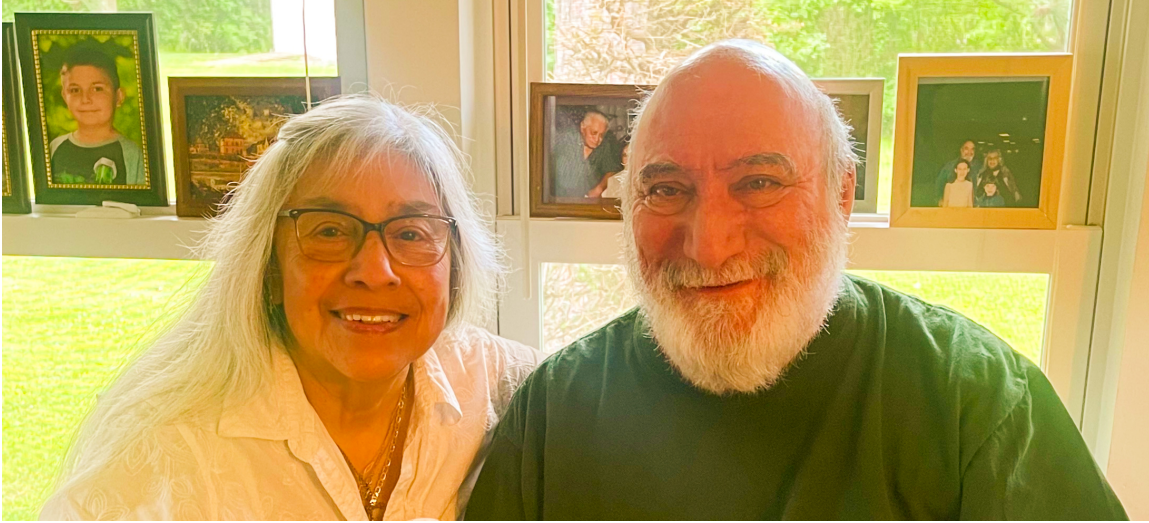
Having considered all these “better things” in the Letter to the Hebrews, let us follow two exhortations of the writer:

“Fix our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfector of our faith.”

Hebrews 12:2

“Through Jesus then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips that give thanks to his name.” Hebrews 13:15

Bill & Frances Furioso
~ At Christ's Table ~



Bill Furioso and his wife, Frances, have been married for more than 40 years, and have two children, four grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Bill and Frances served as missionaries in South Africa for thirteen years making disciples, establishing churches, and training church leaders. Over a span of 40 years, they also traveled extensively in an itinerant Bible teaching ministry which took them to hundreds of gatherings on four continents ministering in churches, conferences, spiritual formation seminars, and home gatherings. They have shepherded several churches, discipled many to Christ, and mentored church leaders in the USA and abroad.

Being an avid student by nature, Bill has done both formal and informal study in various fields including Education, Music, Philosophy and Theology. As a writer, he has authored many publications which are distributed worldwide. Because of Bill's disabilities resulting from a spinal cord injury, he can no longer travel, so their ministries of writing, recording, distributing, mentoring, and correspondence are now shared primarily via the Internet... www.AtChristsTable.org

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