

JESUS OVER EVERYTHING

HEBREWS READING GUIDE

WEEK 1



JESUS OVER EVERYTHING

WEEK 1
JANUARY 16, 2023



CHURCH IN THE SQUARE

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EVERY DAY ...

... A PASSAGE TO READ,

... SOME COMMENTS TO CONSIDER,

... THREE QUESTIONS TO ASK,

... A PRAYER TO PRAY.



WEEK 1

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DAY 1 JESUS SPEAKS

First read Hebrews 1:1-2.

Jesus is the Son, prophet, heir, and creator of all things. The writer of Hebrews (who remains a mystery) packs a wealth of beauty and meaning into these first two verses. Yet in all Christ's rich and diverse quality, this sermon address centers on the fact that Jesus speaks.

As the Son, he speaks the truth of his Father.

As the prophet, he speaks the ancient promises of God.

As the heir, he speaks as a king.

As the creator, he speaks all things into existence.

Jesus speaks. But his manner of speaking goes well beyond the **"many times and ... many ways"** the messengers of history spoke (v.1). Jesus speaks as **"the Word made flesh"** (John 1:14). That is, in Christ God does not just give us a message, he gives us himself. Or as theologian Francis Schaffer explained, "the infinite-personal God, the full Trinitarian God is there and he is not silent" (*He is There and He is Not Silent*). Jesus speaks.

DAY 1 JESUS SPEAKS

1. What does the fact that God speaks through his Son, not just prophets, tell us about his character?
2. How does this passage reshape or challenge your current view of God?
3. What do you think Jesus is saying to you through this passage?

Heavenly Father ...

Thank you for not being silent. Thank you for speaking through your Son. This week, help me to trust your Word, love your Word, and hide your Word in my heart so that I won't sin against you.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

DAY 2

JESUS REIGNS

First read Hebrews 1:1-2.

There's a temporal note within the first two verses of Hebrews. While **"Long ago"** God spoke through prophets, **"in these last days"** he speaks through his Son (w.1,2). For some, the good ole days conjure the comforts of nostalgia and tradition and the last days color the future with dread. But this text is not inviting us to look backwards nor forward. At least not initially. Rather, then and now, we're compelled to look up. We're asked to consider him who is **"appointed the heir of all things"** (v.2). Jesus reigns.

No doubt Psalm 2 weighs heavy on the writer's mind as he sets our gaze upward; **"Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession"** (Psalm 2:8, see also v.5). All peoples are the Lord's heritage. All the cosmos are his possession. Jesus reigns. And as we look to him, our past and future falls into place. He was the coming king whom all of history anticipated. He is our coming hope, the one whose kingdom will arrive in fullness when he returns (Revelation 11:15). Jesus reigns.

DAY 2

JESUS REIGNS

1. How ought the reign of Christ change the way you view your past and your future?
2. In what ways do you live as if Jesus doesn't reign? What sin do you need to confess?
3. How does the cross enable us to live as kingdom people?

Heavenly Father ...

Thank you that your Son does not only speak, but reigns. He exercises control, authority, and love over everything ... including my heart. Forgive me for the ways I often live as if that isn't true. Empower me today to submit myself to your will and way.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

DAY 3 JESUS IS GOD

First read Hebrews 1:3-4.

God created human beings in his image (Genesis 1:27). But the preacher here proclaims that only the Eternal Son is, ***“the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature”*** (v.3, see also John 1:2, Philippians 2:6, and Colossians 1:15). Human beings reflect God. Jesus is God. “The Son provides a true and trustworthy picture of the person of the Father,” explains professor George Guthrie (*NAC Hebrews*, 48).

Jesus himself went as far as to say, ***“I and the Father are one.”*** (John 10:30). That was like saying, *we’re the same person*. And so, the religious elites pick up stones to kill him (see John 10:31). That was blasphemy ... unless, of course, it was true. Daily we’re faced with the same dilemma. If Jesus is God, we know intuitively we have a choice to make. As Dr. Tim Keller has famously observed, “Jesus cannot be just liked. His claims make us either kill him or crown him.” Hebrews’ author leaves no room for interpretive error. Jesus is God.

DAY 3 JESUS IS GOD

1. What struggles do you have with Jesus' claim to be God?
2. How does Jesus' divinity impact your understanding of his teachings, life, death, and resurrection?
3. Since Jesus is God, what burdens can you lay down today? What fears can you release this week? What longings are satisfied?

Heavenly Father ...

Help me to understand you. My limited body and mind fall short of conceiving the fullness of your identity and character. Give me insight into your nature; specifically that Jesus is God. Give me peace with my limitations; specifically that I am not God.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

DAY 4

JESUS SITS

First read Hebrews 1:3-4.

There's something curious about Jesus' posture. While at first blush it might seem like a vacuous detail, for centuries Bible readers have found deep meaning in this simple fact: Jesus sits. The writer actually tells us that Jesus sits four times in Hebrews (see v.3, 8:1, 10:12, 12:2). Each mention brings out a new aspect of the sufficiency of Christ's death. You see, Jesus sits because the work of atonement is done. Other priests stand, always preparing for the next sacrifice. But Jesus, ***"After making purification for sins ... sat down"*** (v.3b).

His death purifies us from the stain of sin forever (1 John 1:7,9). His blood eternally washes us clean of a guilty conscience (Hebrews 10:22). Because Jesus' atonement is once and for all, he sits ... and he still sits.

Scripture tells us that Jesus stood up once. As a crowd was preparing to stone Stephen he ***"gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God"*** (Acts 7:55). Jesus stands to welcome Stephen into his presence. But Jesus sat down after he made a way to welcome all of us. Jesus sits.

DAY 4

JESUS SITS

1. What does it mean that Jesus' death is sufficient?
2. How might you live differently today if you remembered that Jesus is the unhurried, at rest, and seated Lord?
3. What sins do you think Jesus hasn't washed away or cleansed or forgiven? How does this passage bring you comfort?

Heavenly Father ...

What a beautiful picture of your Son! Thank you that Jesus is seated. Thank you that the work is done. Thank you that the work is sufficient. Help me to live today, knowing that Jesus sits.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

DAY 5 JESUS IS SUPERIOR

First read Hebrews 1:3-4.

Hebrews' brilliant opening concludes by continuing to draw our attention upward. With poetic symmetry the writer gives us a picture of Christ which ascends above the heavens and above the angels. Jesus is superior. Yet, his glory overwhelms every other form of distinction in a counterintuitive way.

You see, the majesty, superiority, and excellence of which the writer celebrates, come only after ***“making purification for sins”*** (v.3b). That's why Paul told the Philippians that Jesus ***“humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death ... Therefore God has highly exalted him”*** (Philippians 2:8,9). Exaltation comes through humiliation.

This is not the way we often conceive of greatness. We live in a world where superiority comes through conquest. Whether in sport, business, academia, or, tragically, even family life we learn to achieve by exerting power over others. But in Christ we see a completely different way. His power is in giving up power. He is majestic because he's meek. He is superior because he surrenders. He is excellent because he was executed. Jesus is superior.

DAY 5


JESUS IS SUPERIOR

1. What stands out to you about God and his character in this passage?
2. How do you think Jesus' superiority ought to reshape the way you see yourself and others?
3. Take some time to simply and silently behold Jesus.

Heavenly Father ...

There is no one like your Son. Through his humiliation and exaltation we see the powers plaguing this world reversed and the powers plaguing our souls overwhelmed. Give us a vision today to live like him.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.



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