

The Incomparable Christ

By Paris Reidhead*

Hebrews Chapter 1. One of the grave difficulties that a Pastor has whose Sermon Topics are in the newspaper is to try and get three words or four at the most that express what he has on his heart. It is very difficult not to be trite, or mundane, or something else. But I am delighted with the choice of words today. They are both trite and often used, THE INCOMPARABLE CHRIST.

But you know, he is incomparable. And, therefore, it is not exactly brilliant, but oh it is so wonderfully true, that you cannot compare the Lord Jesus Christ with anyone else. You cannot compare Christianity with any other religion. I occasionally, encounter someone who wants me to talk about comparative religions. But you cannot compare Christianity with any other religion. Every other religion is basically ethical:—Teachings— Do this and live. Do this and please God. Do this and be approved. Do this and meet God. Perhaps. Maybe. But what good is it to you if you have someone say, “If you do this God will be pleased,” when you know you cannot do it, and you aren’t doing it? Hopeless. And the ethical religions have no answer at all for human frailty and sin, and weakness.

But oh how different, how absolutely other is Christianity, where God becomes man, and does for you what you cannot do: To redeem you from the penalty of what you have done wrong. Then He does in you what you ought to do. What a wonderful, wonderful faith is ours.

Well now, The Incomparable Christ. You know too many people think that believing in Christ is just a onetime action. To believe is to come to a point in your history when you say what the Bible says about the Birth of Christ, and the Life of Christ, and the Death of Christ, and the Resurrection of Christ is true. I believe what the Bible says about Him. But this is incorrect, because it implies that God is so pleased with the one event of believing that you never need to repeat it. That you believe at this point, and you can lapse back into unbelief; or lapse back into indifference, and it is quite satisfactory. Absolutely wrong! A believer is not just someone who at one point along the way tipped his hat to God, and said, “Oh all right, it is true.” A believer is someone who has stopped being an unbeliever, and became a believer — someone who just keeps on believing. Faith isn’t something that you exercise, and then it is an air tight compartment in your event — you get it, sort of like a sealed box; because you have asked God for it, you believed. Faith is a change from the lack of faith and no faith. It’s believing that God is what He says He is, and will do what He said He will do.

Now so many people think that that verse we read in John 5:24 means that if at the time they hear it read they agree with it, then they can assume that they have what He was talking about. Listen to it: “He that heareth My Word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting Life, and shall not come into condemnation: but is passed from death unto life.” And they feel that hearing the Word is just hearing that Jesus Christ is God who became flesh and died and rose again. And they believe this, and now they have everlasting Life. Well, that’s how you receive everlasting Life, but the evidence that you have everlasting Life is that you keep on believing everything that Jesus Christ says. It is continuous.

When our Lord took the three disciples with Him up to the Mount of Transfiguration, you recall that impetuous, foolish Peter, (Who is so much like most of us that we feel we are reading our autobiography when we read about him.) But Peter was there, on his face, overwhelmed by the revelation of the Transfigured Lord, and Moses and Elijah. And there he is, on his face, appalled, overwhelmed, and yet he has the rashness, the temerity to peak out under his arm and to say, Lord, we have a suggestion for you. We think what you ought to do is to build three tabernacles, one for Moses, and one for Elijah, and yours in the middle. I think he would have done the Lord that honor, maybe even bigger. You see, Peter still had not come to the place where he recognized that God is not glorified by what we do for Him. He is only glorified by what He has for us to do, and what He does through us. And he was still trying to think up something he could do that would glorify God. And the Father stopped all this once and for all in Peter I trust, and in you, for He couldn’t endure it any longer. Out of the cloud, He spoke to Peter, saying: “This is My Beloved Son. Hear ye Him.” (Mark 9:7) Now the Lord did not say anything there; to our knowledge, nothing was said. But our Lord was to continue... had been speaking, and would continue to speak. And when He had ascended into

Heaven, "The Spirit would come who would bring to their remembrance all things that Christ had said, and would take of the things of Christ not yet revealed." (John 14:26) For He said, "I have many things to show to you and you are not yet ready, able." (John 16:12) And the Spirit of God would take the Words and Truth of Christ and give it to them. And the Church as it was represented by Peter and James and John was to remember that Jesus Christ spoke authoritatively for the Triune God, and their responsibility was to hear Him. Not once, but just to keep on hearing as long as He had anything to say. It became an attitude toward Him.

Now God has spoken to men long before the coming of Christ. We find here in Hebrews, Chapter 1, verse 1, "GOD, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets." He has never lacked for someone to speak for Him. He has always had someone. Or if there was no one at the time, He appeared in theophany, as He did to Abraham as the Angel of the Lord. For I believe it was the Lord Himself who appeared. As a man, capable of eating the kid that was prepared by Sarah, appearing at least as such. At any rate the theophany manifestation of God. There was the Angel of the Lord, the Messenger of the Lord. The theophanies as you know are those events when God has manifested Himself through either Angel or some figure of a man so that He could speak. But generally He has found someone, as He did in the case of Moses, that would be a mouth unto Him, and would speak for Him. And across the centuries God has found a man upon whom He has placed His Spirit, and anointing and empowering presence, and He has had His spokesmen.

Now the message of the Prophets was to be regarded as authoritative. They had credentials to present. Moses said, When a prophet comes to you and says he speaks with God, ask him to prove he is a prophet. Do the work of a prophet. And the work of a prophet was to predict a miracle and have it come to pass in exactly the manner specified. God has had His prophets, long before our Lord came. But all that God has said by the prophets, by the judges, by Moses, by all of the patriarchs of old, He now is confirming in the Lord Jesus Christ for they spoke of Him. They told us of Him.

Last year, you recall, we spent the entire year in Sunday Evening studying, Christ in Types and Shadows. We might at some future time, the Lord carries and spares us all, study Christ in Prophetic Utterance, and find all that is said in the Old Testament concerning the Lord Jesus. He came confirming everything that the prophets had spoken of Him. But it was not only to confirm what had been spoken concerning Him, but He also, came to speak that further Mind, and further Will, and further Revelation of the Father. And so His Ministry, was to declare everything that the Father gave Him.

Now if God used Prophets, and He did, how much more concerned is He going to be about His Son, about the Message that His Son brings, and the reception that is given to His Son. You recall the Parable that was used by our Lord — Of a man who had a vineyard. He sent his laborer to the Vineyard (In this case, speaking of the Prophet), and the people that were working in the vineyard killed his servants. He sent another, a steward, and he was killed. And finally he said, "Well I'll send my son, and they will surely reverence him." But then when they saw him come, they said, "Well, we'll kill the heir, and then the vineyard will be ours." (Matt. 21:33-39) We know that our God, the Father, was greatly concerned about the response that should be given to His Son. For as He had spoken by the Prophets in the past, He now spoke by His Son, testifying by all that was done concerning His Birth. The angels breaking the silence of Heaven, and worshipping Him at the time of His birth. The miracles that were done in providing for Him through the coming of the Kings from the East. His deliverance into Egypt, and His life in Nazareth, and then the works that He performed which we read testified of Him. All of this was the certification that the man Christ Jesus was God come in the flesh.

But notice now what we have concerning Him here in Hebrews; this first Chapter. As God through the writer of Hebrews magnifies the Son, notice in the Second verse: That He is set forth as Creator. God, "by whom also He made the worlds." Carrying us back to John the first Chapter. "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made." (John 1:3) And the Lord Jesus had been the One privileged in the as the Person of the Godhead to speak, and by His speaking bring worlds into being. But as Creator, He is also Heir. "He hath made Him, appointed Him Heir of all things." (Heb. 1:2) Not only were all things made by Him, but all things were made for Him. You must understand this. For it was before the foundation of the world that He was the Lamb Slain, and therefore it was for the Son who would be to that world of men to be yet created Redeemer, that the world with all that was in it was made. He was the heir of all things before the foundation of the world.

Then you notice that He is the Sustainer of everything. The whole universe is sustained by Him. In the third verse, "And upholding all things by the Word of His Power." It is a subtle verse that you find in Colossians when you read, "By Him do all things consist." (Col. 1:17) But when you realize that Greek word "consist" means, held together. Now I invariably apologize when I make any reference to Science. I am not a Scientist, but I am thrilled when I hear what some Scientists have to say. And just this last month in the Readers Digest they had a reprint of the article I referred to, "Seven Reasons Why a Scientist Can Believe in God." But I am thrilled when I realize just a little bit from the laymen's point of view of the nature of the atom, and the fact that it is held there, and my wonderful Lord is the One that holds it all together. "By Him all things consist." And He is the One that said, "Be" and it was. And He is the One who ultimately, as Peter describes, will say, "Unbe" and it will be dissolved with a fervent heat. He holds it together. "All things are upheld by the Word of His Power."

Then not only is He Creator, and Heir, and Sustainer, but He is the Revelation of God. The unfolding of the Triune God. We see here in this that "He is the brightness of His Glory." (Heb. 1:3) How marvelous it is to realize that "this One who was a root out of the dry ground, and no beauty that men should desire Him." (Isa. 53:2) To those who received Him, He was indeed the brightness, the effulgence, the flooding forth of God's glory. And then He was the express Image of His Person. How wonderful it was to be able to handle, and to meet, and to know, and to talk with "God who had become flesh, and was dwelling with men." (John 1:14) The Revelation of God. Only in the Lord Jesus Christ can we understand God. You know, He said, "My works testify of Me." They do. But one thing I call to your attention and that is that the Lord Jesus did not do those wonderful works to prove He was God. Now they proved He was God. That was not why He did it. I believe. I believe He did those works to reveal God, to show what God is, to unveil Him, and to disclose the Triune God. Mercy, and love, and compassion and justice. And if you want to understand the Triune God, then see and acquaint yourself with the Lord Jesus Christ.

We find He is also Redeemer. Isn't this a marvelous list? Creator, Heir, Sustainer, Revelation, and Redeemer. When He had by Himself purged our sins. Here is the Gospel. Christ died for our sins, according to the Scripture. And He was buried, and He was raised again the third day according to the Scripture. Last week, from the Revelation in this series that the Lord seems to be leading us to bring, I spoke to you primarily from that 5th verse, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His Own Blood." (Rev. 1:5) He has purged us from our sins by Himself. He alone could do it. And He was willing to be made sin for us. "He who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." (II Cor. 5:21)

And then we have in addition to Redeemer, this glorious truth: He is Sovereign. "For into His hands has been given, committed all authority in Heaven and earth." (Matt. 28:18) And "when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High." (Heb. 1:3) There He is today in His resurrection body, that body, the first fruit of the resurrection. And the proof of the adequacy of His redeeming work, and our Lord reigns. "All authority in Heaven and earth is given into the hands of the Son."

But in addition to this that He is Creator, and Heir, and Sustainer, and Revelation, and Redeemer, and Sovereign, now the writer comes and says: "And He is above all Angels." (Heb. 1:4a) All Angels. Now I do not quite understand why. Maybe at the time he wrote there were some that were trying to say, as others later did, that Jesus Christ was just an Angel, an angelic revelation of God. But now it is going to be established beyond any question of a doubt that the Lord Jesus Christ was above all angels; for we have it here in this: "Being made so much better than the angels, for he has obtained a more excellent Name than they have." (Heb. 1:4) Then the writer begins to quote from the Old Testament, from Psalm the 2nd Chapter and the 7th verse: "For unto which of the angels had He said at any time, Thou art My Son." (Heb. 1:5a) Never had He given that Name, Son, to an angel. "This day have I begotten Thee." (Heb. 1:5b) And from 2nd Samuel, 7:14 he quotes: "I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son." And from Deuteronomy 32:43 he quotes: "And again when He bringeth in the First Begotten of the world He saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him." (Heb. 1:6) And then he quotes from Psalm 104:4: And of the angels He saith, "who maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire." (Heb. 1:7) He is above all angels.

Creator, Heir, Sustainer. But He is above all of the other angelic beings that ever have been. He is so much better than the angel, because of His Throne. Not only His Name, but His Throne. In Psalm 45:6,7: "Unto the Son He saith, Thy Throne, O God, is forever and ever: A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity: therefore God, even Thy God hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows."

And then we read in Psalm 102, "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish; but Thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but Thou art the same, and Thy years change not." (Psa. 102:25-27)

And then He is better than the angels, because He has a glorious future. But to which of the angels said He at any time, "Sit on My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool?" (Psa. 110:1) "Are they not all ministering spirits, just to be sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation?" (Heb. 1:14)

And then in verse 5 of the 2nd Chapter of *Hebrews*, we read: "For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak." "Christ is given that Name which is above every Name, that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow." (Phil. 2:9,10a) You ought to bear in mind as you think of this 1st Chapter of *Hebrews* what is said in the 2nd Chapter of *Philippians*: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who being in the form of God, thought it not something to be insisted upon or grasped after, to be equal with God; but being found in fashion as a man. He humbled Himself, (Accepted if you please the limitation of His humanity. Accepted His humanity) And became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name above every name: That at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow." (Phil. 2:5-10a) "For unto which of the angels hath" He said, "The world is put in subjection?" None. But unto the Son, Yes. This is the truth that you ought to bear carefully in mind: God the Father said to God the Son, If you will leave Heaven's Glory, and go down and die I promise You "that every knee will bow." And He gave an option. You can either bow now voluntarily and live, or bow then, confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to go off into the Lake of Fire that burneth for ever and ever. But God promised the Son that every knee would bow. This you must understand. "Every knee will bow." They will all do it. You will either do it now voluntarily, happily, breaking before Him as the Rock upon which you fall, or that Rock will fall upon you and you will be ground to powder. But God has said, "Every knee shall bow." And the only option that He gives to men is when-they choose when. Bow now and live. Bow then and die. But the world is, has been put into subjection to His Son.

Now if all of these things are true, and they are, do you see the strength of this 2nd Chapter? I want you to look at it. When God warns men to hear His Son. "This is My Beloved Son. Hear ye Him." God who has spoken to us by the prophets hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, therefore - For this reason - Because His Son is the Creator, and the Heir, and the Sustainer, and the Revelation, and the Redeemer, and the Sovereign, under whom everyone is put in subjection, for this reason, we ought to give the more earnest heed to everything that God has said to us by His Son. Now will you turn please to John. I want you to go into John's Gospel, and I am going to look at just a few verses. John 6:63. Just a few things the Lord Jesus has said about Himself. And I could have taken the entire morning dealing with words of Christ concerning His Word. But the importance of what I am saying today is this, that you must recognize that to hear Christ is not just to hear something about Christ. But to hear everything that Christ has to say. You say, "I believe," when all you have done is to assent to the historicity. This is not believing. To believe is to submit to everything that Jesus Christ said. Not just something. Not just some little thing. "We ought to give the more earnest heed, lest we let anything that He has said slip." (Heb. 2:1) In verse John 6:63: "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; it is the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

Now to John 8:31, 32, and 47: "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on Him, If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." And then to verse 47: "He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God." And then to John 12, the last that I will give you, when there are so many more that you could find by your own careful reading: John 12:46 to 50. "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on Me should not abide in darkness. And if any man hear My words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My Words, hath one that judgeth him: the Word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of Myself; but the Father which sent me, He gave Me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is Life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak."

Judged by His Word. "He that is of God, heareth My Word. He that heareth My Words and doeth them he it is that loveth Me." (Luke 6:47) And thus when we go back to *Hebrews*, we see it is not just a word concerning the birth of Christ, the death of Christ that we are to believe, but we are to believe everything that pertains to so great salvation. God's salvation isn't just to

save you from hell. It is to save you from yourself. And how are you going to escape from the penalty of hell if you refuse to see Jesus Christ dying for you. But how are you going to escape from the indictment that will come, if you say, "Well all I wanted was to escape from hell. I did not want what God wanted." No. It is not just to take, and pick, and choose, and say, "Well, I believe this Word of the Lord. But when you come to Him you receive Him as the Spokesman of God, who authoritatively reveals the mind of God and whatever He says to you, you do. And the evidence that you are a child of God is not that you have simply believed that Jesus Christ was born of a virgin, lived sinlessly, died vicariously, and rose triumphantly. It is that, but it is not just that. The evidence of the genuineness is that you continue in His Word, that you will love His Word, that you will obey His Word, that you submit your life to His Word, that you hold none of His Words as light and cheap, and none of them as that which do not pertain to you, but that everything that Jesus Christ died to make yours is held as dear and precious. And everything that He said to you is held as binding upon you. In other words, it is a commitment to the truth, not just a part of the truth, but to the whole of the truth. And thus we have this warning. "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to these things which we have heard." Not just a thing, but the things that, we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels, and Christ is so much better than angels, — but "if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience to the word of the angels received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost according to His Own Will?" (Heb. 2:2-4)

So what is your attitude now toward the Word of God? How easy it would be if people could take a few proof texts to the fact that they are sinners, and Christ died for them and rose again, and they could say, "This is the whole of the Salvation. This is the whole of Revelation. This I believe. This is all the Bible I need. I have this, and take it."

But it is not that. The evidence of the genuineness of God's grace in your heart, the evidence of redemptive love in your life, the evidence of the transforming supernatural work of the Spirit of God in regenerating you is that you love the Word of God, not just some Word, but all the Word... not just part of it, but the whole of it. And you are not going to let any of it slip, or any of it pass, that you want everything that the Lord Jesus died to make yours, and you want to please Him in everything.

"Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed, lest at any time we should let them slip." "How will we escape if we neglect?" You say, "Well, it is not important-to me the important thing is my sins are forgiven and when I die I will go to Heaven." Yes, that is marvelous. And I would not underestimate it, or I would not make you feel that it was not important. But my friend, this was to remove a difficulty so that God could perform a purpose. And His purpose was not just to take you where He is, but His purpose was to come where you are, that you might be filled with all the fullness of God, that Christ might live in you His own life, that the New Covenant in His Blood, that New Covenant is, "I will write My law upon your Spirits; I will take away the heart of stone; I will give you a heart of flesh; I will put My Spirit within you: I will cause you to walk in My Statutes." (Eze. 36:26,27a) His Word: "Abide in Me, and I in You." (John 15:4) Oh no dear, it's not just to take a part of it and say, I believe this. If you are a believer, then everything that God has said is important to you. And you are going to hold that it is just as important to walk in the light that God gives you today, as it was to repent of your sins yesterday. Do you see? Just as important to obey God today, as it was to obey Him then. This is what faith is. This is what believing is. "If you continue in My Word, then are you My disciples, indeed." (John 8:31)

What am I saying? I am saying the genuineness of God's work in redemption is an attitude of loving the will of God and treasuring it, and obeying it. And I therefore expect wonderful things of you, that you are going to eagerly come to everything that God has said, and want everything (tape ends at this point) Jesus Christ died to make yours. Because I do not believe you want to neglect so great salvation; And thereby deny by your life the testimony you make with your lips. It is eagerness for all that God has revealed and Christ has provided that marks you as truly His. Are you His? Are you? Then you are going to love His Word, and His Commandment will not be grievous. You are going to obey Him. Because this is what He does when He saves you. He gives you a new heart, a new spirit, makes you a new creation. He Himself becomes your life.

Let us bow in prayer.

Our Father, Thy Son Thou hast exalted above every name that is named. Thou hast spoken from Heaven, saying Hear Him. Hear Him. Thou hast made Him so much greater than the angels; and if Thou didst bring the word of angels to just recompense of reward for disobedience how much more wilt Thou deal with those who discard and disregard and deny and despise the Word of Thy Son. For Thou hast spoken unto us by Thy Son. Oh may we treasure the Word of Thy Son, and evidence the genuineness of Thy work in our hearts by giving the more earnest heed to everything that Thou hast said by Thy Son. For Jesus Sake we pray. Amen.

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