Title: The Preeminence of Christ

Text: Heb 1:1-3

Date: 4-3-16

Introduction:

First His preeminence in revelation

**I. The Preeminence of Christ in Revelation v. 1-2a**

Heb 1:1-2a 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, NASB

Through out history, throughout the world all types of religions, sects and cults have tried to understand and explain God through human reasoning and understanding. They attempt to teach men how to find God and how to please God and usually create a god regardless of what form it might take who thinks and acts like men.

What we understand from the Bible is just the opposite; God's takes the initiative and chooses to make Himself known and knowable by communicating with humanity. This is a statement that God spoke in the past, referring to the beginning of humanity up to the incarnation. The word spoke is understood to mean to communicate. God communicated in various ways at various times and places to a variety of people. That communication is the revelation of God; Revelation is God making Himself known to mankind.

He walked in the garden with Adam and Eve. He spoke to Abraham in dreams and visions and appeared to him in a preincarnate bodily form. He spoke to Eli, Nathan, Solomon and Joseph through dreams; He spoke to Ezekiel through visions as He did to the apostle John in the book of Revelation. He spoke to Moses from the burning bush; on Mt Sinai He spoke to him in thunder and lightening; to Elijah, who looked for the voice of God in the spectacular; the wind and the earthquake and the fire, he spoke in a still small voice.

One of those primary ways God makes Himself know is through the written word. We find in Scripture God wrote His law on stone tablets; He commanded Moses to write down the words of the covenant, Isaiah and Jeremiah were told to write God's word on scrolls. In Rv 1:11 John is told: "Write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven churches. . .NASB

Through out history God progressively or gradually revealed Himself. He revealed as much as was needed for the particular time and people to whom He spoke. God’s revelation while always true moves from lesser to greater. For example in Gen 3 after the fall there is a promise and a foretelling of Christ in Genesis 3:14-19. God revealed there would be an ongoing struggle between satanic forces in the world and humanity. That Satan through his presence in the world would cause great harm to humanity but ultimately the seed of Adam and Eve which Paul later identifies as Christ in Gal 3:16 would ultimately be victorious.

The Bible is God's divinely inspired written revelation to mankind. Paul explained to Timothy 2 Ti 3:16-17: All Scripture is inspired by God (God breathed) and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. NASB

Everything we know about Jesus, who is the Living Word of God is revealed in the Bible which is the written Word of God. That's why in Christian churches the proclamation of God's written word is a central part of worship. In the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message (which is our accepted statement of faith as a church) the very last sentence in it’s statement on the Bible says: "All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation." All Scripture, both Old and New Testament, points us to Jesus.

In Paul's written summation of the gospel (or good news) In 1 Co 15:3-4 he wrote: 3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins **according to the Scriptures**, 4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day **according to the Scriptures**, NASB It is vitally important for the Christian church, especially in the current climate of our world, to understand and to teach:

The Bible is not just a book written by men about God;

The Bible does not simply contain the word of God;

The Bible is the very word of God.

Again to quote the Baptist Faith and Message concerning the Bible: “It (the Bible) is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy.” If we have an exalted view of God we must have an exalted view of His word.

The challenge to the church today is the authority of Scripture. It’s not really a new challenge. As a matter of fact it is the oldest challenge. It’s not a challenge to God’s authority but to the authority of His word. What was the question the serpent asked Eve in Gen? Has God said? Today when the nature of the Bible is attacked the authority of the Bible is attacked and the question is the same one. Has God said? As God's written ("inscripturated") revelation its authority is the authority of God; because what Scripture says, God says.

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In the Bible God spoke to people to provide a progressive understanding about Himself. Here are seven things God progressively reveals about Himself:

(1) His Character.

(2) His moral precepts

(3) That there exists a separation between God and man and why

(4) How that separation is bridged so that we may be reconciled to Him

(5) How we can communicate with a Holy God

(6) How we are to live out the teachings of God

(7) What the future is about

All of those have their beginnings and are partially but not completely revealed to us through the Old Testament. The revelation of the Old Testament pointed towards the ultimate revelation of Jesus which is revealed to us through the pages of the New Testament.

The preeminence or the superiority of Christ in revelation is affirmed in v.2 . Heb 1:1-2 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 NASB Christ is the preeminent revelation of God. John said it this way in Jn 1:18 John wrote: No man has seen God at any time; **the only begotten God**, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him. NASB God the Son makes known God the Father. This preeminent revelation is not merely referring to what Jesus taught, but who He is.

Looking back at those seven points of revelation we find their most complete expression or understanding is found in Jesus. However, the point of Jesus preeminence in revelation is not about discovering God or explaining God nor even pleasing God but is about knowing God. Not knowing about God but knowing Him in a relational way and experiencing a personal relationship with God through Christ. Everything we do as Christians revolves around our relationship with Christ.

R. Kent Hughes said, "Through the incarnation God wrote Himself into life. . ." The Word became flesh and He made His dwelling with us. Jesus made it possible for us to know God as we could never know Him before. Not just as a God in Heaven, or as a holy, just and righteous God, or a God of a certain people or of a certain place, but a personal God who seeks a relationship with people. Those who receive Jesus by faith who come to know Him relationally are then filled with the living, life giving presence of God through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ is preeminent in revelation because He is God in the flesh and reveals a personal God to men and women enslaved by sin. The written Word is how God made the Living Word known to humanity.

The second point of this passage is that Jesus Christ is not only preeminent in revelation, He is also preeminent in creation.

II. The Preeminence of Christ in Creation v. 2b-3

Heb 1:2-3

2 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. 3 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. NASB

Creation is also a form of God's revelation. We call the creation general revelation. The Bible says in Ps 19:1-3, The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard.

There are several things to think about when we consider the creation. Creation is limitless; we have only to look into the heavens at night and try counting the stars just within our range of vision to realize that. The more we find in space the more there is in space The creation is also powerful think about the power of hurricane Katrina that devastated New Orleans several years ago, or the tornadoes that hit Hallam or Joplin, MO. The creation is spectacular; think about the wonder and beauty of places like Niagra falls or Victoria falls, or the Grand Canyon. Creation is also beautiful consider the flowers and trees and birds and other animals, and creation is very complex.

Lets consider the complexity of creation. To see that complexity we really need to look no further than our own bodies. Just think about the differences between us, different hair and eyes and body types heights and weights and different interests. Yet we sit here this morning, our heart beats, our lungs breath our organs work in harmony to keep our different bodies functioning. Your eyes looked at the print on the screen and recognized the words of the songs we sang. You opened your mouths and the words came out and they were harmonious. Those of us who can’t sing were covered by the voices of those who can. You sit and listen and your ears hear and your brain functions your minds comprehend and think thoughts about what you hear. But we are even more complex.

The late Dr Carl Sagan, who was an astronomer and avowed atheist recognized the complexity of creation. In His book The Dragons of Eden, He describes the complexity of a Chromosome. A Chromosome is linear strand of DNA within the nucleus of a single cell.

He describes it this way:

“A single human chromosome contains twenty billion bits of information. How much information is twenty billion bits? What would be its equivalent, if it were written down in an ordinary printed book in modern human language? Twenty billion bits are the equivalent of about three billion letters. If there are approximately six letters in an average word, the information content of a human chromosome corresponds to about five hundred million words. If there are about three hundred words on an ordinary page of printed type, this corresponds to about two million pages. If a typical book contains five hundred such pages, the information content of a single human chromosome corresponds to some four thousand volumes. It is clear, then, that the chromosome contains an enormous library of information. It is equally clear that so rich a library is required to specify as exquisitely constructed and intricately functioning an object as a human being..”

I was curious, if that is the complexity of one chromosome in one cell how many cells are in the human body? So I looked it up on the internet and you know if it’s on the internet it has to be true, right. I found this on the National Geographic web site from an article quoting a study published in Annals of Human Biology, entitled, “An Estimation of the Number of Cells in the Human Body.”

Here is the quote: “The authors–a team of scientists from Italy, Greece, and Spain–admit that they’re hardly the first people to tackle this question. They looked back over scientific journals and books from the past couple centuries and found many estimates. **But those estimates sprawled over a huge range, from 5 billion to 200 million trillion cells.** And practically none of scientists who offered those numbers provided an explanation for how they came up with them. Clearly, this is a subject ripe for research.”

The point is not only is creation very complex but the human body overwhelmingly complex. So much so that I can’t fathom how much faith it takes to think that complexity developed by accident.

It’s because of that kind of complexity that throughout history mankind has sought to worship creation. But creation is just that, creation it is created and Christ is preeminent in creation for two reasons: [1] He is the one that brought it all into existence v. 2, and thus naturally the heir of all things; [2] because He is the one that keeps it all existing v. 3. The Bible says in Col 1:16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

It's vastness, power, beauty and complexity are all deliberate products of the mind, will and purpose of God through Christ Jesus. The wonders of the creation are not accidental they are purposeful.

All of that created and sustained by the power of Christ. The things we refer to as natural law are all a part of the design of God. The laws that hold the planets and the stars in space are there and work as they do because God purposed them to work that way. The things we know and understand in the realm of science about atoms and molecular structures as well as the things we have yet to learn are in place and are sustained by the power of God through Jesus Christ the Son.

Jesus Christ is preeminent in creation, because he is the God of creation. But perhaps the area of His preeminence most important to us is salvation.

III. The Preeminence of Christ in Salvation v. 3b

The Bible says in verse 3 He Himself purged our sins. The word translated purge means to clean. Throughout the scripture the metaphor of uncleanliness is used to describe our condition as sinners. As sinners we are unclean and in need of cleansing from sin. Last week we focused on the death and resurrection of Jesus. In John Lowery's song he asked what can wash away my sin? The answer is nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Many people think they can work and achieve their own salvation. They think if I do enough good deeds they will somehow outweigh the wrong I have done. Or they believe that are faithful in their church attendance and present a good image they can make themselves acceptable. Many religions teach a salvation by works to please the god or gods or the spirits.

But it's like going to the dentist. We usually brush our teeth thoroughly or maybe even more than once before we go in an effort to make them look their best for the dentist so he will think we have been taking care of them as we should. I always do that with flossing so I can say I floss regularly. They used to give you a little red pill to chew or a some red liquid to swish around in your mouth when you did that it revealed plaque and other deposits that you couldn’t see and can only be removed by the dentist.

Sin is the same way. By ourselves we might be able to hide it, or cover it up, or disguise it. But when we stand in the presence of a just and holy God and our lives are examined in the light of His righteousness just like that little red pill reveals plaque on our teeth, his glory reveals the sin in our life and there is only one person who can cleanse it. That is Jesus Christ the only begotten of the Father.

At Caesarea, Peter in preaching to those gathered at the home of the Gentile Cornelius said in Acts 10:43: "To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission, (or the cleansing) of sins."

The Bible says in Acts 4:12" there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

In Jn 14:6 Jesus in giving final words to his disciples about his impending departure said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

There is no other way, what can make me whole again? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

But not only does He cleanse from sin, His cleansing is complete. Verse three says that when he had purged our sins He sat down at the right hand of the father. This is a way of saying that his mission was complete. The cross of Christ is sufficient to take care of our sin once and for all. In Hebrews 9 the Bible says that he has appeared once for all to do away with sin by his own sacrifice.

Christ is preeminent in revelation, in creation and in salvation. Is he preeminent in your life?

He has created you and has revealed himself to you and He gave his life for you and he calls you to give your life to Him.