Congregation of the Lord Jesus Christ,

We had Holiday Bible Club on Wednesday. And for those of you who were not there, what would you do if you agreed to write a report about the Holiday Bible Club? You would speak to people who were there, like the organizers and some of the children and parents who attended, so that you could put together an accurate report.

Well, this is exactly what Luke, the author of the Gospel of Luke, did, in regards to the life of the Lord Jesus. Luke was not there when Jesus was born. But he tells us at the beginning of his Gospel that he carefully investigated the accounts of those who were eye-witnesses of the events surrounding the life of Jesus. And he used their reports to put together what he calls his “*orderly account*.” So the record of the appearance of the angel Gabriel to Mary, which we read a few moments ago, is a part of Luke’s “*orderly account*” of the events surrounding the first coming of Jesus.

Well, our text in Hebrews is also about the first coming of Jesus. But it reads very differently than what Luke wrote. There is no baby in a manger or shepherds or wise men; it is not a record of events, put together from talking to different people who were there. What it is, instead, is a declaration that Jesus did come and why this is important.

So we could call our text the **So what? of the coming of Jesus**. Many people might agree that Jesus was born, but so what? Why is this important? This is the concerns of Hebrews. And we will walk through our text under four PR words headings – **Preparation**, **presentation**, **pre**-**eminence**, and **proclamation**. And then we will be ready for the So what? of all of this.

1. So verse 1 begins with some words about the **Preparation** for Christ: “*Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets*.”
   1. And I am sure that you boys and girls remember the many stories of the Old Testament that describe God speaking to people. It started in the Garden of Eden with God speaking directly to Adam. But God also spoke directly to Abraham and Moses and to many prophets. Sometimes it was through visions and dreams, but also through what are called Theophanies. A Theophany is a visible appearance of God, like the burning bush or the cloud above Mount Sinai. And if you study each time God spoke, whether it was to do with a person or place or a law or an event, at its heart, He was revealing a little bit more about the Messiah that He was going to send. So sometimes it was a direct promise about Jesus, like the one to Eve about a descendant of hers that would crush the head of the serpent. At other times it was a direct prophecy, like the one to Isaiah about a virgin birth. But at other times it was about His plans for Israel or instructions about offerings or ordaining a priest or King, etc. But as we have seen with our Leviticus sermons, ultimately, and before anything else, God’s words were always revealing more and more about the Lord Jesus; He was *preparing* God’s peoplefor the coming of Jesus Christ.
2. But the time came when the Lord Jesus finally came to earth. And that is what verse 2 is about: “*But in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son*.” And these words describe the **Presentation** of Christ:
   1. Back in the olden days, when rich people had parties, every new person that arrived at the party would be presented. So one of the servants would announce: “Presenting Mr and Mrs Jones.” Well, verse 2 is basically a presentation of Jesus – Jesus had arrived on earth.
   2. And because verse 1 talks about the many ways that God spoke to His people and verse 2 talks about now He has spoken to us by His Son, we see that Jesus is the last and best and fullest Word or revelation of God. What the whole Old Testament adds up to is Jesus Christ.
      1. BY way of illustration, think of a **Wasgij** puzzle. You know the ones I mean? With normal puzzles, the picture that the puzzle makes is on the side of the box. So you know what the finished picture will look like. But with a Wasgij puzzle, you do not know what the final picture is until the puzzle is completely put together. Well, Jesus is like the last piece of the Old Testament Wasgig puzzle. Genesis tells us something about Jesus and Exodus tells us a bit more, all the way through to Malachi, but even if you have the complete Old Testament, without the coming of Jesus, and faith in Him, you do not have the complete picture.
      2. Paul talks about this in **2 Corinthians 3** in relation to unconverted Jews. He said that they have a veil over their hearts that keeps them from understanding what the Old Testament is all about. “*For to this day,*”He said, “*when they read the old [Testament] … that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away*.”
         1. So it doesn’t matter that unconverted Jews believe that God created all things in the space of six days and try and keep the 10 Commandments and have many Psalms memorized. If they do not believe in Jesus, they do not understand the Old Testament or know God.
         2. Jesus said, “*I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me*.”
         3. So the god that the unconverted Jews worship is an idol; it is not the God of the Bible. He can only be known through Jesus.
         4. And this point is important because Hebrews was originally written to Jewish Christians who were thinking of going back to Old Testament Judaism. So the author wanted them to see that Jesus is superior to every aspect of Old Testament religion and what every aspect of Old Testament religion pointed forward to.
      3. So Jesus is the complete revelation of God.
   3. But if we flip over to **chapter 2:9**, we see words that explain **how the Lord Jesus was presented**: We read, “*Who for a little while was made lower than the angels*.” And what this means is explained in **verse 14** where it talks about how Jesus became flesh and blood.
      1. And this is the incredible mystery that our Lord’s Day speaks about: “The eternal Son of God, who is and remains true and eternal God, took to Himself, through the working of the Holy Spirit, from the flesh and blood of the virgin Mary, a truly human nature.”
      2. So by becoming a human being, Jesus became, for a little while, “*lower than the angels*.”
      3. So much of human life is about working for promotion, isn’t it. We want a higher position or greater recognition. A few months back we heard that Todd Muller had ousted Simon Bridges from the National Leadership. So Todd was now the leader of the National Party. He had succeeded in getting to the top! But just three weeks later he stood down. He didn’t want to be the leader any more. And so many people couldn’t believe it. How could he let that go?
      4. But Jesus let His exalted position in heaven go. And He ‘dropped down’ in rank to lower than the angels! Isn’t that incredible? What a stooping down! What a gracious condescension. And He did this to be the Saviour that you and I need!
3. But He is not lower than the angels today. And that is what our third point is about as we see what our text says about the **Pre-eminence of** Christ. And preeminence means superior/more excellent. And we see this in a series of phrases in ch. 1. Let’s look at each:
   1. The first is in **verse 2**: “*Whom He appointed the* ***heir*** *of all things*.” And boys and girls, an heir is a person who receives the things that belonged to a person who died. So children are usually heirs of their parents; they receive whatever their parents owned after their parents die. Well, God the Father will never die, but He has appointed the Lord Jesus as His heir. And at the end of time, the Father will give the new heavens and the new earth and all of His chosen people, all things, in fact, to the Son!
   2. The next phrase says, “***Through whom also He created the world***.” So think about this: The helpless baby Jesus, who had to wait to be fed, was, at the same time, the One by whom the whole world as created! What an incredible mystery!
   3. But He is also “***the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature***.” If you want to know what you really look like, what do you do? You look in a mirror. But if no mirror is available, a pool of still water will work also. You will see a perfect reflection.
      1. Well, when you look at unconverted human beings, it is as though someone has stirred up all the mud at the bottom of the pool. The reflection is very poor. You can hardly see any reflection at all of God’s image.
      2. And when you look at those who are followers of Jesus, it is like a muddy pool that has been left for a while and you can see more of an outline and a fuzzy reflection of the image of God.
      3. But when you look at Jesus, in the Word, by faith, you are looking at a perfectly still and clear reflection of God. Jesus said, “*He who has seen me has seen the Father.*” You want to know who God is? Look at Jesus. Read the Bible.
   4. But Jesus also, as **verse 3** continues, “***Upholds the universe by the word of His power***.” I am pretty sure that you, like me, are glad to get through each day with most of the tasks on your ‘to do’ list completed. And do you ever have that nagging thought that there was something that you were supposed to do but you can’t remember what it is? Or what about when you write something down in your diary on a clear day but you have a nagging thought that there is something else already booked then but nothing is written there and you can’t remember what it might be? Well, without ever forgetting something or making a mistake, Jesus Christ controls and directs every atom and molecule and cell and planet and star in this vast universe!
   5. But **verse 3** continues, “***After making purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the majesty on High***.” In our Leviticus sermon series, we have seen that the priests had to offer sacrifices for themselves and the people, every day! But not Jesus. Because He is sinless and because He is God, He offered Himself, once for all, and then rose and ascended into heaven, where He sits at God’s right hand.
      1. And **sitting down** signifies ‘job done,’ doesn’t it. We all know how that works. You mow the lawn or paint the fence or weed the garden, and when it’s done, you sit down. Job finished. Well, having offered Himself as the sacrifice for our sins, Jesus earned the right to sit down in the place of highest honour – the Father’s right hand!
   6. And **verses 4-5** continue thisthought by telling us that Jesus is no longer lower than the angels: “*Having become as much superior to angels as the name He has inherited is more excellent than theirs. For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you"? Or again, "I will be to Him a father, and He shall be to me a son"? And again, when He brings the firstborn into the world, He says, ‘Let all God’s angels worship Him.’”*
      1. **Revelation 5:11-12** are a vision of heaven. We read, “*I heard around the throne … the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!"*”
      2. Jesus is the pre-eminent, more excellent, superior, worshipped by angels, Son of God!
4. Well, that brings us, fourthly and lastly, to the **Proclamation** of Christ.
   1. You will notice in your Bibles that **verses 1-4** of chapter 1 are a block of text. But as you come to v5 and then various other verses through chapters 1-2, they are set out in a different style. And that is because they are **quotes** from elsewhere in the Bible. And **chapter 2:6-8** is a quote from **Psalm 8**. And we sung Psalm 8 earlier in the service. It is about humanity. It is a lament, if you like, that we have not reached the ultimate purpose for which we were created. Way back in Genesis 1, God said to Adam, “*Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over [everything.]*” So that was our creation purpose; we were to subdue and rule over all of creation. But then came the Fall. And God said to Adam, “*Cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you*.” So instead of us ruling over all of creation, we are very weak and subject to illness and injury. Rust and bacteria and weeds affect everything we touch. And then we die. **Romans 8** describes creation as being in “*bondage to corruption*.” And even though Jesus came the first time, and even though He took to Himself a human nature and is now exalted to heaven, the end of **verse 8** says, “*At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to Him.*” So the ultimate purpose for which humanity was created has still not been reached.
   2. But in **1 Corinthians 15** we are told that Jesus is, right now, subduing all things and exercising dominion and reigning. And the end will come “*when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet*.” And then God’s people, the church of Christ, will reign with Him, forever!

So tying this all together, we see this: Mankind’s ultimate purpose is to join Jesus in the new heavens and the new earth and to rule with Him. But it is only those who believe in Him as the Son of God and as their Saviour who will reach that destiny. **That’s the so what? of the coming of Jesus**. The baby who was born in Bethlehem’s manger died on the cross and rose again and He now lives and reigns in heaven as the King of kings and Lord of lords. Will you rule with Him in heaven? Have you received Him and believed in His name? Are you preparing for that day now by working to subdue sin in your life? Are you a hard worker or a diligent student? Is this why you read your Bible? Because you want to know more about Jesus and what serving Jesus looks like?

Praise God for the first coming of Jesus and may He come again, soon. Amen.