

On our recent Lost for Words course one of the things we did was address common questions that people might ask us. One question we looked at was, “why Jesus?” We recognised that people may well ask why should they follow Jesus when there are so many other religious leaders and gurus around?

For the Christian readers in Rome to whom this letter was written it was a pertinent question.

I remember doing a canoe trip down the Thames and always being concerned we moored the boat up securely. The thought of watching the current take the boat away was a bit of a worry.

These Christians in Rome were in danger of drifting from the moorings of Jesus.

There was the pull of their Jewish roots and the pull of the world around them.

If we are here this morning or listening on download and are a follower of Jesus then we can also find ourselves drifting from our moorings in Jesus.

When I first got my car it wasn't new but it was special and I looked after it carefully and kept it bright and clean. Now it is a bit grubby it could do with a bit of a spruce up but it doesn't get the attention it did when it was new. For us when we first come to faith it is all exciting and good but over time our faith can grow dull we can lose that first love, the real desire to be honouring God and then questions like this – why Jesus – can unsettle us.

In addition we recognise that we live in a world which is both highly secular and multi faith and which can cause us to drift from our moorings, can pull us away from Jesus.

So the question Why Jesus is relevant to us. Why follow him in the first place and then why continue to follow him especially when things get tough?

The clear message of this passage, and indeed the whole letter to the Hebrews, is because there's no greater name than Jesus. Peter's response to Jesus in John 6 when Jesus asked his disciples if they would desert him was “Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.” (John 6:68) Later, when on trial before the Sanhedrin, Peter said of Jesus, “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12).

Peter was clear and so should we be so let's look at some answers to why Jesus from this passage.

### **1. He is the final word of revelation v1-3a**

“but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son”v2. The point the writer is making is that however else God has spoken down the ages now he has spoken in a new and final way not through but in his Son who is Jesus.

Jesus is the final word of revelation.

This is because of who he is and that is spelt out in these verses:

**V2 he is the heir of all things.** The great sign of sonship is being the one who will inherit and here we see that the Son will inherit the whole universe a sign of who the son is.

**v2 he is the creator** – a few years back there was a lot in the press about people if not actually disinheriting their children at least not allowing them simple to have what they had not worked for. Here we see that what Jesus will inherit is only what he has made. As we saw last week “In the beginning was the word .....Through him all things were made” (John 1:1-3). This Jesus is not merely a Galilean preacher but the one who shaped the universe bringing stars and galaxies into being and **v3 He sustains all things by his powerful word.** That powerful word by which he created is effective in sustaining the world.

**v3 He radiates the glory of God.** The glory of God is his visible presence. As we read in Luke 2:9 “An angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them”, that is God’s visible presence was there with those shepherd on that hillside outside Bethlehem no wonder the verse carries on “and they were terrified”. Here Jesus is described as the personification of God’s glory. God’s visible presence in Jesus.

**v3 He is the exact representation of God.** That is when you see Jesus you see God. There is no greater revelation of God than Jesus. He is God in human form, the final word of revelation. The Bible is the story of God speaking to his people. “In the past” refers to God’s word in the O.T. What he said through the O.T. was and is true but it was incomplete as a revelation of God. “In these last days” refers to the Christian era and to the fuller revelation of God and his will which we see in the N.T. and has its focus in Jesus. He is the final word of revelation for he as the Son of God fully reveals God to us.

Many years back when we still had coal mines the miners went on strike and the nation was plunged into a three day working week and power cuts. I remember one evening walking home in the dark. I was walking along a road I knew well but made unfamiliar by the darkness. It wasn’t completely dark because there was a bit of moonlight and an occasional paraffin lamp gave a glow out of a window. Then every so often would be a burst of light as a car came past. Then I noticed ahead in a garden an odd shape and the more I peered at it the less I knew what it was. I wasn’t afraid just intrigued. So I had to go back the next morning to find out what it was. It was a car under as plastic cover. The daylight gave full revelation.

Throughout the history of the world God has been revealing himself sometimes in the moonlight of the natural world sometimes in the paraffin lamp of events he has brought about such as the Exodus, sometimes through the car headlights of his word through the prophets but now through the sunlight of Jesus, the light of the world.

Jesus is the final word of revelation. 'Why Jesus?' because there is no greater revelation of God than in Jesus and there is no further revelation of God after Jesus. If we wish to know God the answer is Jesus. Advent is the time of waiting for the Messiah to come Jesus is that Messiah, God's final word of revelation

### **2. He is the final word of salvation v3b**

"He provided purification for sins". These Christians having a Jewish background well aware of the sacrificial system and later on in the letter the writer will take several chapters to show how Jesus greater than any High Priest (7:24-25) and how his sacrifice once offered on the cross was sufficient (10:10). Why Jesus because only through him and through his death on the cross can they and we be restored as God's children, forgiven, holy and acceptable to God the Father.

He did this through his death and then "he sat down at the right hand of the majesty in heaven". The emphasis in the verses is on the task completed - he sat down. The work was complete there was nothing to be added to it. No need ever again to go to the temple and offer a pair of doves or whatever. He not only reveals God to us but he enables us then to be acceptable to God.

Why Jesus because only through Jesus can we find salvation "Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." "there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."

### **3. He is incomparable v4-14**

The rest of the chapter seeks to compare Jesus with angels. "So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs" (v4). This may seem odd to us because angels don't tend to feature very high in our thinking except at Christmas. Indeed the reason for this contrast is hard to understand. Perhaps the readers were involved in worship of angels. It may be that some of the voices prising these Christians away from Jesus were describing him as just one of the heavenly beings and not really God simply on par with the angels and so the writer using the O.T. and Jesus as fulfilling that offers the comparison.

v4&5 he has a greater name. He is the one who is the son and that was attested when the Father raised him from the dead (cf Acts 13.32-36). He alone has been raised.

v6 he only is to be worshipped.

v8 his nature is superior, the angels v7 are servants while Jesus as God sits on the throne of Heaven

v10 & 12 he is eternal and we'll see this again at the end of the letter in the statement that he is the same yesterday today and forever.

v10-12 he is the reigning Lord who rules over everything.

If you draw all those things together the writer is making it clear that Jesus is God, eternal, reigning and to be worshipped – there's no one greater than Jesus!

V14 angels are messengers Jesus is the message. The angels as we know well from the Christmas story were heralds to proclaim the coming of the Saviour, God's son.

The writer here makes it clear that Jesus was greater than the angels and so says to these early readers and through them to us don't be drifting off from Jesus. There is no one greater.

Way back in O.T. God's challenge to his people who were drifting off to worship other gods was "to whom will you compare me or who is my equal" (Isaiah 40.25) and the same is true here, to whom can we compare Jesus and the answer is with no one for he is God.

For these people throughout this letter the question is there to whom will you compare Jesus and the answer is no one because he is God who created and who sustains the universe – how can anyone else compare to him?

In our own day when there seem to be many faiths competing for adherents and many religious leaders so that people ask why Jesus? Here is the answer he is the eternal God who rules over the whole of creation and to whom alone worship should be given.

So if you are questioned as why Jesus or if you are yourself questioning why Jesus here the writer to the Hebrews gives us some answers. Jesus is God and as God he is the complete revelation of God, he is the only way of salvation and he is incomparable. "Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."

As we draw towards the end of advent and get ready to celebrate the birth of Jesus we celebrate not just the birth of another child but the birth of the saviour and King of the world. Here is Jesus who is God and who as God reveals God to us today. Here is Jesus who died on a cross that we might be forgiven restored as God's children and have new life.

If you have not yet accepted Jesus as Saviour and Lord then take time over these days of Christmas to think and reflect on who he is. If you are a follower and are perhaps for some reason finding that your ties to Jesus are being loosened then look again at him as God and Saviour and yes ask that question "To whom shall we go?" There is no greater name than Jesus. There is no other name by which we must be saved. Then recognising that let's hold on to him and as the writer to the Hebrews puts it later on, "let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith". (Heb 12:1-2)