

**St. Luke Ev. Lutheran
Church**

**Sermon by Pastor
Anthony E. Schultz
Ash Wednesday
February 14, 2018
Hebrews 1:1-3 EHV.**



JESUS CHRIST
IS OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST

God Speaks To Us By His Son

1 In the past, God spoke to our forefathers by the prophets at many times and in many ways. **2** In these last days, he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. **3** The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact imprint of the divine nature. He sustains all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he took his seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

People of God, rescued from the flaming lake of fire in Hell by the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God:

It was what – some 4,000 years ago – that the LORD – the Great I AM – the same yesterday and today and forever – brought His people out of literally sore bondage and slavery in Egypt – out into the wilderness on the way to the land literally flowing with milk and honey. Once in the wilderness – at the foot of Mt. Sinai the LORD gave Moses the Law – very complicated and exceedingly technical rules – don't taste – don't touch – don't handle this, that or the other! The LORD would be worshiped in the Tabernacle – a place of worship – literally a tent. This tent had a massive altar – where animals – lambs and sheep and goats and bulls and turtle doves would die. People would pour out the

sweetest wine and the purest olive oil and the first fruits – the first part of the harvest – to the LORD. People knew in the most graphic and painful way – **“without the shedding of blood – there is no forgiveness!”** Thus at first light – until the sun went down – each day began and was filled and ended – with whole burnt offerings, sin offerings, guilt offerings, fellowship offerings. God’s people understood in a most graphic way, **“The wages of sin is death!”** Priests – men descended from Aaron – and able to *prove* it – from meticulous records of family trees – wore the clothing the LORD prescribed – as they went about making these sacrifices! The priests were led by the High Priest – again wearing the clothing that the LORD Himself described – exceedingly complicated – extremely symbolic – like the breastplate – that held 12 jewels – one for each of the 12 Tribes of Israel. Into the Most Holy Place went the High Priest – to sprinkle blood on the mercy seat – on the Ark of the Covenant – because of the sins of the people! This 2018 Lenten Season – with Jesus’ permission – we will think about **Jesus Christ Is Our Great High Priest!** Today begins our 40 day walk of repentance – up to Jerusalem where we will see Jesus in a Kangaroo Court – falsely accused – scourged – crowned with thorns – crucified and alive again on the 3rd day. This Lenten Season God’s Word will remind us again and again:

Jesus Is Our Great High Priest

- 1. Jesus Is Qualified**
- 2. Jesus Purified Us**
- 3. Jesus Will Glorify Us!**

There are some 66 books in the Cannon – the accepted Books of the Bible. If we have been lifetime Christians – baptized when we were only days old – maybe even hours old – maybe even only minutes old. Melinda and Melissa were only 45 minutes old – in

their incubators – hooked up to all sorts of monitors and IVs – when they were baptized with distilled water from a little glass bottle – before they even had names because we had an ultrasound and were only expecting one baby! Isaac David Baker was born into a family where baby boys were in terrible danger – so when he was born by means of C-section – the doctor clamped and cut the cord. His father carried him out of the delivery room into the hallway where I was waiting with the water and Isaac David was born again – literally less than 2 *Mississippi~s* after his birth! If we have been lifetime believers – instructed in God’s Word in Sunday School – in 3K and 4K and K through 8th and confirmed--then through Lakeside or Luther Prep – and then on to Martin Luther College – *I don’t think it’s unreasonable to expect* – name any one of those 66 books of the Bible – and we could say in a sentence or two – what makes that book unique – and so? Jonah and the Great Fish – Micah – baby Jesus will be born in Bethlehem – Nahum – preached much like Jonah to that great and terrible city of Ninevah. The Ninevites by the grace of God – listened to Jonah and repented. They heard Nahum and did not repent! And God’s crushing judgment came down upon them washing them all away. When you think of The Letter to the Hebrews what comes to mind? The Letter to the Hebrews does not spend any time talking about who wrote it. Most likely not the Apostle Paul – who was inspired by the Holy Spirit to begin his letters with his name Paul – called to be an Apostle. It doesn’t tell us to whom the inspired writer is writing – to Christians of Jewish background – it seems – suffering for their faith in Jesus. It would be tempting – therefore – to return to their familiar and comfortable Judaism! Back to the faith they had grown up with – all the familiar and comfortable traditions that had been handed

down to them from their grandparents – and from their grandparents before them for generations and generations!

What The Letter to the Hebrews does – is get right down to the business at hand – the greatness of the **Lord Jesus**--illustrated by comparisons – one after the other. The ultimate always and forever – the Lord Jesus! What is more wondrous than angels? Ezekiel saw angels. Have you read from the scroll of the Prophet Ezekiel lately? Ezekiel **saw what looked like four living creatures. In appearance their form was human, ⁶ but each of them had four faces and four wings. ⁷ Their legs were straight; their feet were like those of a calf and gleamed like burnished bronze. ⁸ Under their wings on their four sides they had human hands. All four of them had faces and wings, ⁹ and the wings of one touched the wings of another. Each one went straight ahead; they did not turn as they moved. ¹⁰ Their faces looked like this: Each of the four had the face of a human being, and on the right side each had the face of a lion, and on the left the face of an ox; each also had the face of an eagle. ¹¹ Such were their faces. They each had two wings spreading out upward, each wing touching that of the creature on either side; and each had two other wings covering its body. ¹² Each one went straight ahead. Wherever the spirit would go, they would go, without turning as they went. ¹³ The appearance of the living creatures was like burning coals of fire or like torches. Fire moved back and forth among the creatures; it was bright, and lightning flashed out of it. ¹⁴ The creatures sped back and forth like flashes of lightning.** Ezekiel chapter 1. Isaiah saw angels. Have you read from the scroll of the Prophet Isaiah lately? **In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. ² Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with**

two they were flying. ³ And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." ⁴ At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. ⁵ "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty." ⁶ Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. ⁷ With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for." Isaiah chapter 6. As incredible as these Heavenly Creatures are they cannot begin to compare to the Son of God – Jesus! The Triune God-Father, Son and Holy Spirit – Three Persons – One God – eternal – without beginning and without end – all powerful – able to do anything and everything – all knowing – understanding and controlling the sun, moon, stars, planets – wind and waves and weather – everything! God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit – on a day known only to God and the angels – created them! Chapter 2 is in the NIV entitled *Warning to Pay Attention!* It is one thing to show up for Church and another thing – to really concentrate – really pay attention. It is a blessing to be more and more like the Bereans! Remember them? St. Luke wrote: Acts 17:11 **Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.** You need to go home from Church – and get out your Bible and your Catechism and your People's Bibles and make sure that the Word of God you hear from this pulpit and from the Ambo at Luther Prep and from beside the Ark of the

Covenant at Lakeside Lutheran High School is faithful to the Scriptures!

Consider the fact that Jesus became one of us. ⁵ For God did not place the coming world, about which we are speaking, under the control of angels. ⁶ But there is a place where someone has testified: What is man that you remember him, or the Son of Man that you look after him? ⁷ You made him lower than the angels for a little while. You crowned him with glory and honor. ⁸ You put everything in subjection under his feet. Indeed, in putting everything in subjection to him, God left nothing that is not in subjection to him. At the present time, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him. ⁹ But we look to Jesus (the one who was made lower than the angels for a little while, so that by God's grace he might taste death for everyone), now crowned with glory and honor, because he suffered death. Hebrews chapter 2.

In the past, God spoke to our forefathers by the prophets at many times and in many ways. ² In these last days, he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. This year for Christmas I got something I always wanted – a model of our Solar System. There is a light in the middle – the sun. Then there are 2 circles where you attach wires – at the end of each wire a planet. The most obvious Saturn – with these unique rings – going all around. There is Neptune and Mars. There is this really little planet – Oliver said, “Grandma – this is where you live!” It's very small – white on the top and the bottom – mostly blue around the middle – with these green parts – the continents. There is a remote control – with one large button. Push the button and the sun lights up. Push the button a second time and all the planets go round and round and round. It is incredible to think there are

some 7 ½ billion people on planet earth – whizzing through space – around and around each 24 hours – all the way around the sun every 365 days – except for that leap year thing which I don't pretend to understand! Of those 7 billion people give to take a few million **do not – most do not** know that Jesus is their only Savior from sin and guilt. Somebody needs to tell them. Who will that be? Who is going to tell your neighbor next door? Who is going to tell your co-worker – that person you have a cup of coffee with 2 or 3 times every day? Who is going to be the Pastor and the Principal and the Day School and the Sunday School teacher – when the ones who are doing it now are too old? What can we do to encourage Millennials to look up from their little screens – to see the Maker of the Moon and the planets? What can we do to encourage fellow members of St. Luke's to come to Church every Sunday – using the means of grace?!

³ The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact imprint of the divine nature. He sustains all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he took his seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Purification for sins – a fundamental concept! Perhaps the greatest of all the plays of William Shakespeare has to be The Tragedy of Macbeth! It was likely first performed in the year of our Lord 1606! As the story goes 3 witches – “*Toil and trouble*”...tell the Scottish General Macbeth that one day he will be the King! Consumed with ambition and the desire for power and control – Macbeth and Lady Macbeth murder King Duncan! Lady Macbeth is consumed with guilt that sends her walking in her sleep through the Palace saying, “Out eternal destruction spot!” – as she fails again and again to wash from her hands the bloody guilt that plagues her conscience day and night! Do you know what that feels like – to have your conscience ache from the sins

of the past? Again this is the fundamental truth of our faith – Jesus **provided purification for sins** – all of them! Only after that work was completed – did Jesus **take his seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high!** Jesus is the Lamb of God – who paid for the sins of the whole wide world. God bless this new Lenten Season – as we walk beside Jesus for the next 40 days – up to Jerusalem – to the hill shaped like a skull – then to hear the angels say on Easter morning – “**He is not here – He is risen just as He said!**” Jesus is the Lamb of God – who took away all our sins! “Thank you, Jesus!” Amen!

To God alone all glory!

Rev. Anthony P. Schatz

