

Hebrews (Part Five): Who Was Jesus?

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I am continuing the Hebrews series with another message identifying many characteristics of the very centerpiece of the epistle to the Hebrews. Jesus Christ is that centerpiece. And thus my title again is going to be, “Who was Jesus?”

This is my fourth sermon with this title. I expected to finish this portion with my previous sermon, but there is so much more information on Him that I did not get to cover. The amount of material on Him is so great because He is so important to the entire creation, and now, since our calling to our individual, personal, spiritual growth, and salvation.

Other than the Father there is nobody else that even begins to compare for a top position of leadership in the administration of this creation.

Specifically, there is another set of factors that are going to be our guide at the very beginning of this epistle, and we will expand from there. We will begin with the first four verses in the book of Hebrews.

It took an unusually mature spiritual mind with many years of experiential knowledge and understanding with Jesus personally, and within the Christian church for this vital epistle to be written. Now there is one major overriding reason why the epistle to the Hebrews begins as it does. It is that the disciples must gather as much material in understanding for as long as it is possible for us to grow to appreciate, to admire, to esteem, to regard, and to submit to Jesus of Nazareth with our life.

Now why? Why that series of qualities that we all need? It is because He is *that important*, that *essential* to our connection to eternity and all of its glories. If we are going to garner most of the valuable spirituality from our calling, it is going to be through Him because He exists, and not merely exists, but because He is carrying out the responsibilities given to Him. Now

garnering the most with a firm foundation of factors of truths about Him, and that is how the author begins revealing our Savior.

That truth is best begun with awesome wonderment concerning His offices and accomplishments. Never forget that it was He, without even one iota of boasting, dogmatically stated in John 15:5, that “Without Me, you can do nothing!” Think about that. Without a vital connection to Him, we can do *nothing*. He preceded that statement by describing Him as being the vine to which we are connected. And even what is connected to the vine cannot produce a thing without the vine being there. That is how He described His importance to us.

Now He meant “nothing” in terms of God’s creative spiritual purpose now being worked out in our lives. Oh, we can build atomic bombs or hydrogen bombs, we can go to the moon, but what do they have to do with God’s purpose? In other words, God created mankind with a tremendous amount of intelligence to do things *physically*. But *spiritually* we got to have that connection with Jesus Christ, or we produce zilch, nada, nothing.

Think about how important He is. And what we have been given is a relationship with Him.

Hebrews 1:1-4 God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

So as we begin Hebrews, we are also switching authors from the apostle John to possibly the apostle Paul. No one knows with absolute certainty who wrote it. It is titled in English language Bibles, as an epistle, but only one chapter in the entire book is similar to other epistles, and that the last chapter, the thirteenth chapter.

Its form is, in reality, more treatise-like than an epistle, from one friend to many friends. It is also interesting that the subject of the first sentence is God. And that too is somewhat unusual, if you care to check it out, see how many epistles or books of the Bible begin with the word God. Not very many, but Hebrews does, and that kind of sets it apart. It is somewhat unusual. And in this beginning, God also makes an announcement. This is not real apparent to people of the English language, but the opening paragraph uses a form of wording that can be understood to mean that one time period has ended, and with the entrance of Jesus Christ, a new one has begun.

So God is setting this particular book apart, and it of course is written specifically for the church. We have got to understand that with Jesus Christ coming to this earth, a new time period, a new age has begun. Brethren, that is a reality, the past is past, God will revive it when He needs it, but we are at the beginning, and actually we are reaching toward the end of this new time period.

In addition, the purpose for Hebrews' writing is also very different from all the other epistles, and that too is a vital reason it is begun in the manner that it is. A major reason for its content is to *confirm or affirm His qualifications as High Priest*. Mark that down in your mind. No other New Testament writing shares the details of this very important-to-our-salvation knowledge. I mean it is so important that He is there, and that is why there is so much information about Him because, in a way, our salvation hinges on Him.

It is helpful to remember that this epistle was authored after many years of experience delivering sermons, Bible studies, and having countless private discussions that occurred especially during the early life of the church immediately following Christ's resurrection and the giving of God's Holy Spirit. So by the time that Christ dies in 31 AD, and was resurrected shortly after that in three days and three nights, it began a period of time that lasted probably till somewhere around 65 AD before this book was actually written. So the apostles had a long time to consider what went into this book.

Many of the other books of the Bible were dictated. But this one was not dictated, that is another abnormality. So it came out of their studies, out of their meditations, it came out of their witnessing the life of Jesus Christ during His ministry.

Now during the time period to its literal writing, one of the immediate purposes of Hebrews was to convince Jews already within the framework of the church that Jesus was fully qualified to be High Priest. Acts 15, which we went through pretty thoroughly a couple of sermons ago, clearly establishes the historical fact of this need because controversies had indeed risen within the church.

We are going to go to Hebrews 8 and then come back to Hebrews 1. I specifically chose these verses because of the way Hebrews 8:1 begins. We are beginning the whole book of Hebrews, but Hebrews 8 makes this notation by the author.

Hebrews 8:1-9 Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man. For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore it is necessary that this One [meaning Jesus Christ] also have something to offer. For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law [That might have been one of the objections that the Jewish converts coming into the church did not get about Him], who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, “See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.” But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry [than Moses], inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. Because finding fault with them, He says: “Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the

house of Judah—not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the Lord.”

The author, whoever he is, uses virtually the entire epistle to summarize the epistle to the Hebrews content in this way. It took him seven full chapters to reach this point because the details of which he wrote were necessary for them to be compiled, that is, for the benefit of the church. But he used the opening paragraph in chapter 1 to name seven of Jesus’ qualifications ever-so-briefly, but at the same time with effective and telling comprehensiveness of thought by specifically naming them in order to give assurance that the church administration was in good hands.

Jesus, right from the very beginning, it is pointed out by the author, is a highly qualified Mediator. That is what a high priest does, he mediates. Now what the apostle John may describe in more detail, this author names qualifications with lighting-like rapidity. He is laying a foundation of characteristics that Jesus in some way fulfilled in His ministry or was assigned in heaven above, revealed in the Old Testament, and continues to this day to fulfill.

The author will build his foundation of knowledge with specific details as he proceeds to add upon these offices that Jesus holds. In fact, the ones the author names in the first paragraph are announced with all the subtlety of a tremendous thunderclap! And I mean it. That is quite an opening, and I even told you that there are people who say the book of Hebrews contains in its opening the most thunderous opening anybody ever wrote at the beginning of a message. People who said that, or evaluated that, were at least appreciative somewhat of Jesus Christ, the offices He held already.

Each one of those characteristics is a tremendous attainment and a responsibility all by itself. And the entire package is awesome to give serious consideration to. I do not know how anybody could have come up with a better opening to proving the qualifications of Jesus to be High Priest than was given. I think that we can confidently say that it was inspired by God

from the very beginning. He is telling church members *this* is what you are dealing with. And brethren, He wants us to be impressed so that we give our willing submission to One who is fully qualified to give us salvation.

So the entire package is awesome to give serious consideration to, and there is, I might say, no hiding of this unique God-Man's qualifications as High Priest. And the author will use the remainder of the epistle to cover them in some way.

As we begin, I will name those qualifications and provide ever-so-brief explanations and descriptions. But before I proceed into them I am going to move ahead into chapter 2 to a term the author portrays Jesus by what Jesus, I believe, will summarize His qualifications in a way that we might understand with a bit more clarity for our time. So turn back with me now to Hebrews 2.

Hebrews 2:10 For it was fitting for Him [Jesus], for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain [that is Jesus Christ] of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

In this context, Jesus' title is captain of our salvation. Captain is today a military term. It is one of over three hundred titles assigned to Jesus in the Bible. Now the modern term *captain* is translated from the Greek term *Archegos*. This most specifically means "chief leader." It more specifically defines one who proceeds before others. Thus, it can also describe a pioneer as well as a leader of a group. So, a captain is an *archegos*. An *archegos*, that is a military term, is generally perceived as one who inspires others to deeds of valor.

Now regarding salvation, mark this well in your mind. Christ has gone before us in three ways to lead us to salvation. Number one, in obedience to the Father. Number two, in the suffering of His office to achieve God's glory. And number three, in His example of both living and teaching the way of glory into God's Kingdom. He is leading us in that direction.

I think that we can confidently say that major, major functions toward our salvation has been committed to Him by the Father. In one way we can say

God has committed our salvation to the skill, the authority, the experience, the mind, the mercy of Jesus Christ, and His willingness to put up with us. To *patiently* put up with us.

Now the term *archegos* encapsulates in one word the blending of characteristics given in the opening paragraph, those four verses, that qualifies Him as our worthy High Priest. The *archegos* is being applied to a very specific, unique, One of a kind.

So back to chapter 1 and his listing of His qualifications. I will give you those qualifications and you will pick them up as you will see in the first four verses. What a description!

He is, as we have already seen, the only begotten Son, unique of all who have ever lived. With the exception of the Father, there has *never* been another like Him. This is why He is unique, a One of a kind. Now it is helpful to recall that although He took on humanity, He never at any time abandoned being God! He was both at the same time. Now maybe you do not think of it that way, but in one sense being God was a *burden* that He carried and all of these characteristics with it right through His human period and only *one slip up* would have ruined that for all time.

Is He qualified to teach this way of life? Is He qualified to deal with the weaknesses of humanity? Because He experienced it too, and He battled it through and made it to the end.

Let us go to Psalm 2 just to see a reference. That is why I said earlier that the author did this proving things from out of the Old Testament.

Psalm 2:1-9 Why do the nations rage, and the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against His Anointed [There is the word, Messiah. The root of the word, the Lord's Messiah.], saying, "Let us break Their bonds in pieces and cast away Their cords from us." ["Why do we want to be tied to God?"] He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall hold them in derision. Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, and distress them in His deep displeasure: "Yet I have set My king on My holy hill of Zion

[the Lord says]. I will declare the decree: The Lord has said to Me, 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You. [Remember in Hebrews 1 who is being described as holding this office? It is the one who is our High Priest.] Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.'"

Now the unconverted Jewish people had already determined, and rightly so, that this Psalm 2 was a prophecy of some fulfilling of the life of the Messiah. The only begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ, was the Promised Seed of Genesis 3, and identified elsewhere as the Messiah who would defend them from their enemies.

Qualification number one, He is the only begotten Son of God. That is pretty high ranking. How does Moses compare to that?

Qualification number two is, He is already appointed Heir of all things. Turn with me to Colossians 1.

Colossians 1:15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

Firstborn does not mean born as we think of born in terms of coming out of a woman's womb. But rather *firstborn* is being used here as a term of significance. Highest ranking is another way of saying it. Remember we are talking about the Messiah.

Colossians 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.

Are these things being piled one on top of the other about what He has already accomplished? Does He have enough power to save us?

Colossians 1:17-20 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.

He is already appointed heir of all things. Now it might be asked, can any higher honor be given to Him? To the ancient Jews He is already being named heir, regardless, the heir's age conveys assurance of ownership in addition to dignity and dominion. To the ancient Jews it assures continuance in office and administration. The term is like money in the bank, but it is a more dignified way of conveying assurance that what matters to the Father will be continued by the Son. This leads to the logical conclusion that the church is in good hands.

That is number two in regards to what Christ has already accomplished or been assigned. And remember, do not lose sight of what the author is doing here. He is showing why Jesus is qualified to be our High Priest.

Qualification number three, the first paragraph states that He is the Creator of all things and the giver to all living the life that they possess. That means all life, everywhere, except for the Father. The very existence of the creation speaks of His thoughtful caring, orderly intelligence, and power.

This is another very reassuring reality to those who think these things through. We need to consider whether there is any sort of competitor who qualifies higher than Jesus in terms of His desire to faithfully care for what He Himself has created. He is going to take care of what He did.

So in Hebrews 3, the author directly makes this very claim comparing Christ to Moses. Yes, Moses was indeed faithful as a servant in the house, but Christ is faithful as the Builder of the house. The creation thus typified Christ's faithful caring for mankind. What He created is wonderfully awesome. In every thought regarding the creation, He had mankind in mind

that was going to inherit that creation. Think of that. He made the creation with us in mind.

Qualification number 4, is that it states that He is the brightness of God's glory, the express image of His person. Jesus had already stated to in John 10:30, that He and the Father are one. So this author is essentially saying the same thing but with somewhat different descriptors. He is exactly *like* His Father in both purpose and character, and even as the Father is immutable and self-sufficient, so also is the Son.

What the author is saying here is *astounding*, brethren. He is saying that the Son is, except in overall authority, in absolutely no way inferior to the Father! Think on that! That assures continuance. So whatever glorious excellency is in the Father is also in the Son. One of the things that John 1:18 is teaching is that as we are by nature humanly equipped, by nature at birth, to not perceive the brightness of God's glory.

I will explain that a little further because this fits into this category regarding what Christ is doing. Without Christ (I want you to tie this into John 1:18), mankind is vague regarding details of God's glorious realities. It is in the Christ connection that God becomes sharply defined by those that God has called. And John 1:18 says that the Son has revealed the Father. He did not just reveal His existence. What we need to see in Christ is that He revealed *exactly* what the Father is. And thus, through Christ, we perceive the Father's glory. If Christ had never come, we would not even know the Father existed. Or we would not even know that He is every bit as glorious as the Son.

Qualification number five, is that it literally says that Christ is the express image of God's person. It is though what the Father is in His character is engraved into the Son. (This point explains the previous one a bit further.)

Let us go to Colossians 1 and in verse 15. We will repeat this, but it is so important that we get this concept.

Colossians 1:15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

This does not pertain to the way He looks from our gaze, but to the internal characteristics of the Father. And the author further states,

Colossians 2:9 For in Him [that is, Jesus Christ] dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

Some modern translators state this verse by saying, “For in him the whole fullness of deity continues to dwell in bodily form giving complete expression of the divine nature.” Another way of saying it, you see the Son, you see the Father.

Now one of the elements that spins off from this is that since God is invisible, all true knowledge of God must proceed from God to us, otherwise we continuously create gods from our own imagination, because we do not know what He looks like. I want you to draw a picture of Him. You cannot do it.

Now John 1 clearly reveals it was in and through Christ that mankind was given some measure of insight into God’s reality. If Christ had never come, we probably would not even know that the Father exists. But now we see that They are a team that is forming a family of others who are just like them.

If you want to see what your future is going to be like, look at Christ’s description. We will have different offices than He holds, but nonetheless, we too will be in the image of the Father. We too will be in the image of the Son. Not in the way we look, but in our character image. What a world that is going to be!—where we will be able to create as They do. We will not do it right away, but that is the objective toward which we are headed.

Once we know that Jesus Christ was God, even as He was here on earth, one of the elements that spins off from this is that since God is invisible, all true knowledge of God must proceed from God to us, otherwise we continuously create gods from our own imagination. Now we do have these truths. He upholds all things in the universe by the word of His power. This speaks of two major points.

First, since He is in the image of the Father, is the continuing preservation of all that exists. Let that one knock around on your head for a while. This gives testimony of the second. It is of His continuing faithful dominion and management of His creation. It is never going to disappear, brethren, because Jesus Christ has determined that He will never allow it to pass from existence. This is affirmation of Christ's continuing faithful administration of His creation that is going to continue on forever, and ever, and ever, and that Family will never stop creating.

I know we wonder, why is the universe this big? Well, there are going to be a lot of people out there working to add to its glory.

Qualification number six is, He Himself purged us of our sins. This one is perhaps the highest of glories benefiting mankind. This is a second very important aspect of His administration of His rulership as He faithfully works to prepare us for His Kingdom by not deviating from the same purpose as the Father, even to the point that He gave His life to make sure that He never deviated by even a hairsbreadth. He will continue faithfully.

What is especially noteworthy with regard to us is something that is in Hebrews 10.

Hebrews 10:1-4 For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. [This next statement is really a bombshell.] For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.

That can be stretched to define that there was never any forgiveness for sin under the Old Covenant, unless the Father or the Son did it. As far as the actual practices of it at the Temple, no forgiveness ever occurred.

I will repeat what I just stated. This one is perhaps the highest of glories benefiting mankind. He *Himself* purged us of our sins. This is a second very important aspect of His administration of His rulership as He faithfully works to prepare us for His Kingdom by not deviating from the same purpose as the Father, even to the point that it cost Him His life. So what is especially noteworthy with regard to us is something that is in Hebrews 10:1-4. We learn there is no purification whatever from the filth of sin by means of the purification rites done under the Old Covenant.

Qualification number seven is, the very One who created us, and then descended to earth to begin to lift mankind to highly exalted positions, is now re-positioned in heaven at the right hand of God from which He is enabled to survey all that is created on it. Having clearly passed God's judgment, He is already second only to the Father in rulership thus again witnessing to His faithfulness to the Father and His purpose.

So with this dazzling array of accomplishments listed by the author fresh in our minds, I want to continue on by recalling a directive that came from the Father to the apostles. I gave you this before, but it contains excellent advice from our Father in heaven and is presented in Matthew 17.

Matthew 17:1-8 Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up a high mountain by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!" And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid. But Jesus came and touched them and said, "Arise, and do not be afraid." When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.

With this dazzling array of accomplishments, I think I can understand why those men did and said what they did. Here is God, giving His opinion, and there is *none* greater. I got this from Author Pink's commentary, and Pink himself admitted that he did not know who originated the thought and the application that was made. Pink thought enough about it to make it a part of his teaching in his commentary. It is drawn of course from the transfiguration event described here in Matthew 17. God Himself used this to illustrate the importance of Christ's teaching as compared to two other great figures in Israelitish history. During the transfiguration Christ appears with both Moses and Elijah, and how those men recognized Moses and Elijah, I do not know. They had never seen them in their life. Somehow, they knew that it was a vision of Moses and Elijah, two of the truly great figures in Israelitish history.

Now God says at the beginning of the vision, "This is My beloved Son, hear Him." That is about as direct a command as can be given especially considering the One who gave it. This was the Father speaking, probably through an emissary, but nonetheless. Now the use of the word "hear" is instructive because it leaves the door open for one to understand that there are others speaking who can also be heard. Heard? Yes, but it can be said in such a way as, "Don't you dare listen to anybody else." I do not know what inflection was given there, but the words say, "Hear My Son." And when the cloud overshadows all three, the figures are blotted from view.

But Peter was so impressed, he asks permission of Christ to make these tabernacles. He probably intended to make these as monuments because he wanted to acknowledge the distinctive leadership of these three. And when the cloud completely dissipates, Moses and Elijah were no longer seen. Only Christ remained visible. The instruction brethren, is clear. The greater glory connected with the teaching of Jesus Christ is so much greater than the others. This even includes prophets that God sent, they disappear from view. So what remains is this thought. We have choices, but, "This is My beloved, hear HIM!"

In a word, we can hear in this world many voices, but God is saying separate yourselves from them, concentrate on hearing My Son.

I also want to spend a little bit of time teaching somewhat about Jesus' manner of instructing the apostles and to a limited extent even some of His present-day disciples because we are getting at least a taste of what they went through.

Now why do I want to mention about the way that Jesus taught? Because I believe it is important to our success. Jesus' method of teaching to those who became His apostles was radically different from anything that had ever been tried by a God Being before. His life as a unique God/Man was literally experienced before twelve men He specifically appointed to follow Him. He did this as He carried out His personal responsibilities revealing the Father, revealing Himself, the gospel, and His way of life.

Now the term *specifically* is important to the impression we get from being taught in the manner that we are. We too are *specifically* called. This is important to grasp. The calling is made by our Creator. That needs to be sunk into our mind. *No one* comes to the Son, unless he is drawn by the Father. What a privilege! We get the opportunity to hear the Christ! His Son, who has all these qualifications to be our leader and to follow Him.

Now we do not get it quite as dramatically as the apostles did. But we have been singly, individually called to be in His Family and to be taught by His Son in His leadership position. He did this as He carried out His personal responsibilities of revealing the Father. He, as the Creator/Builder is not satisfied—do you understand this?—that any old part that just happens to be lying around will do, as He fits the 144,000 member team that He is preparing to be in a state of readiness after His, Jesus Christ's, return.

He is following the plan. He is following the blueprint that was laid down by the Father and Him. And when I say that He is not satisfied with any old part that happens to be lying around that He will fumble around and fit into the thing that He is putting together—the organization—not so! He picks us out *individually* and *personally*, to follow His Son and listen to Him as He teaches. Are we impressed, or what?

Nothing impresses Americans anymore. Boy, the millennials are really impressed. Oh no, they have seen it all, they think. But we came out of the same configuration in this nation and that is why I said at the very beginning

that we need to be *impressed* and really, to admire Him, so that we submit to Him out of the necessity that we feel within us to give ourselves over to Him in obedience, that we might be prepared for the Kingdom of God.

Now notice qualities they possess and specifically name that enables them to be a part of this preparing. Let us take a brief look at this in the book of Revelation.

Revelation 14:1-5 Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God.

Do you think that God is going to pick out any of these 144,000 that just happens to be lying around on the ground of the organization that He is putting together? Not at all. God is a planner, a builder, a designer, and He knows *exactly* what He wants. Do not ever get the idea that you just happen to have the qualities that He wanted. Did you ever stop to think, He might have given you the qualities in the the first place? He is a Creator after all, remember.

We just heard in a commentary that God can raise the dead to life. Do you think God is without imagination in what He is putting together? All we have to do is look at the creation in our weak way and know that this thing has been put together with an awesome intellect.

Now I want you to notice, I think it is five qualities that I wrote down here, regarding the 144,000.

Number one: They all have the Father's name. Apparently, mentally and indelibly written on their foreheads. He is on their minds. That sets them apart. They think about the Father.

Number two: They sing to a new song that only they possessed. You should know from the Psalms, that God's songs tell an important portion of a story.

Number three: They are not defiled by false religion in any way.

(Those three are already clearly written.)

Number four: They follow the Lamb *wherever* He goes as He carries out His assignments and appointments. They are not going to deviate from the leadership one bit.

Number five: It is especially noted that they are in no way deceitful.

Now one of the things that leads me to understand that we are going to the same organization that the apostles are in, or will be in when they are alive once again. I believe that in doing things as He did, He is doing the same thing, modified a little bit, that He did with the apostles. Even as they were individually, personally chosen by Jesus Christ, we find Jesus saying in John 6:44 that each one of us is also chosen like the apostles were, individually and personally by the Father.

Then what did they do after they were chosen? Well, Christ proceeded on this routine for 3½ years on an almost daily basis as He traveled over the entire land of Israel preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God and His way of life from within the gospel while they witnessed His actions and reactions in a multitude of situations. And the content of what became the gospels, the other epistles, and the epistle to the Hebrews, was learned by the apostles on the fly, as it were, in the midst of life as it was being practiced in literal day by day, real life situations. And teaching as done by Christ, through a combination of formal sit-down sessions combined with living lessons, as Jesus exemplified them by His life and as He verbally taught them during real times in those 3½ years.

And as we know, at the end of this method of teaching by God in the flesh, revealed a major extent of His love by giving Himself, in death, sacrificing His life for the spiritual benefit of those following. Could any teacher possibly go farther? Well, this is a major reason why John 13:1 literally says in the Greek language, that “He loved them to the uttermost.” Which means to the last and to the highest degree possible. He gave His life for them.

What I want you to get out of the tail end of this, is that we are going through the same basic process, modified a little bit to meet the situation as the church nears the end of the age, but we are learning in much the same way every Sabbath. We have a teaching, a sit-down session, but during the week we have to apply what we learn day by day, inch by inch, as we grow within the love of the Father and the Son.