

Christmas Eve Sermon: Hebrews 1 – “Guaranteed”

Rev. Bruce Stanley

www.waitaraanglican.com.au



- Intro: Receipts

There are two types of people in this world:

People who keep receipts. And people who don't.

You buy something – does the receipt go straight in the bin? Does it go in your purse or wallet? Does it end up in a filing cabinet? Does it have a special place with all the warranty booklets?

Sometimes I throw the receipts out – because you can't return, for example, fruit! Although it would be fun to try that!

And sometimes I keep the receipt because I'm not really sure if I want it. So I might want to return it. Some shops have this “change of mind” policy.

But sometimes I keep the receipt because I think it's probably going to break, which usually happens just after the warranty runs out anyway...

- Have you ever returned a broken item under warranty?

Sometimes they just replace it. No problems. Other times, they look at you funny, like it's your fault! Why ask things like: “What did you DO to it?” NOTHING! “I've never seen anything *like* this before. Did you drop it?” NO! IT JUST STOPPED WORKING!

“Strange, I can't see why it would just stop working...”

And on and on it goes. They sell you a product that isn't reliable, and they question YOU – like they don't trust YOU!

Imagine that something difficult happens in your life. And you turn to God. And you say: “God, I will trust you with this, but I want some kind of guarantee – a warranty”. You might say: God, I need a job – give me a guarantee that you will provide the right job for me – that I can trust you with it...” And down from the heavens comes a receipt: “Job – perfect for you – provided by God. Warranty – 3 years.”

Wouldn't that be great! A receipt for prayers. A guarantee!

“God – I need healing”

Receipt: “One healing – warranty: 5 years.”

Fantastic!

“God, I'd love to get married, or have children, or find the right home to live in...”

Receipt falls down: “One spouse, one child, one home... 20 year warranty”

Wouldn't that be nice! A 20 year warranty on a husband! And we could have a change of mind policy. Or a "wrong size" returns policy – this job didn't fit... I need a different one". Or if it breaks, we get a replacement...

You see, a receipt is evidence. And a warranty is a guarantee. That's why they're so important. They are evidence that we've bought something. Evidence that we've been somewhere. Evidence that we've done something. A receipt for a computer we've bought. A wrist band for entrance to a theme park. A T-shirt to show we've been on holidays somewhere. Evidence. Proof. A guarantee.

Listen to Hebrews 1:1...

- 1In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, 2but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son

God has spoken throughout history in many different ways. To Moses, Abraham, David, the prophets, the priests... through angels, through miraculous works... But in these last days, he spoke to us through a son.

In the past, God made promises – guarantees – to his people. He delivered them from slavery. He protected them from their enemies. He gave them a land to live in. In the past, God spoke in many different ways to his people. Issuing them with lots of receipts!

He promises a King – there's a King. Receipt.

He promises them protection – receipt – protection.

He promises to deliver them from slavery in Egypt – Along comes Moses with the plagues – receipt.

God gives receipt after receipt to show that he is THERE. That he is tangible. That he is real and in control. And we have the evidence. The receipt. Again and again, God gave out lots of receipts. Proof. Guarantees of his Word.

But in these last days, he has reconciled all the accounts and has issued a final invoice. One final piece of evidence. One final receipt. One final warranty and guarantee. His son Jesus. And Jesus is the evidence, the final once and for all evidence, from God:

Has God fulfilled all his promises? A King, a Messiah, a Saviour? Yes. And the receipt is Jesus.

Has God been to earth? Yes. Receipt – Jesus.

Does God care about us? Yes. Guaranteed. Receipt – Jesus.

Does God want to deal with sin? Yes. Receipt – Jesus.

Is God merciful and just? Yes. The receipt? Jesus.

Jesus is the evidence, the final warranty, that God has fulfilled all of his promises.

- The Big Gift

Sometimes you might really like someone a lot and you buy them lots of little gifts for Christmas maybe? But then you buy one big special gift. That's the one that matters. No other gifts are needed. Just that big one. And usually, it's the expensive one. The one that costs a lot. The one that makes the other gifts look fairly insignificant. The other gifts are important. They all show you care for them and love them. But that last gift – that's what really counts.

I don't buy my wife flowers all year and then not give her a gift for her birthday or Christmas. That would be silly!

God spoke in the past through the prophets. Through amazing works. Again and again he showed that he cares for his people and loves them. But in these last days, he has brought out the big gift. The big evidence. The big receipt. Jesus. And it was the most expensive gift. The gift that cost the most. And now, because of that gift, nothing else is needed. It is finished.

Verse 3:

3The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.

Jesus is the exact representation, the exact image, of God. He IS God in human form. God on earth. We have seen God's receipts throughout the Bible.

Isaiah 9:6 – “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

Luke 1:26 – God sent the angel Gabriel to Mary – “You will be with child and will give birth to a Son and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High.”

And now, all the promises of God come to a conclusion – Hebrews 1: That's all folks. This is it. The final receipt. The final evidence. He's done it all.

No returns policy. No change of mind policy. No “it doesn't fit me” policy”.

- And that is often the issue with Jesus. People try him out and then find that he doesn't fit their life, their goals, their desires.

But God says: He IS the answer. He DOES fit. He WILL provide all your needs in eternity. He IS the best fit for you because you were made to be in a relationship with him. The struggle is often coming to realize that it's US who needs to change, not Jesus.

We can look around for different solutions to our struggles in life, but the only solution that will fit always, is Jesus. Because he is the way we can be made right with God.

Christmas isn't just a celebration of God coming into the world as a baby. It's the celebration that God fulfilled all his promises and has given us all we need.

- Christmas is a time when we often think about our needs.

As we buy gifts and catch up with family, we think about all we have, and all we need. We contemplate the things that are really important. But most of all, this is a time to trust God – that he has already given us ALL we need in Jesus. Through his birth, life, death and resurrection, we have the final receipt – the final guarantee – an eternal warranty – that we have been offered eternal life – everything we need – in Jesus.

We have been given the Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Let's pray.

Hebrews 1:1-6

1In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, **2**but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. **3**The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. **4**So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.

The Son Superior to Angels

5For to which of the angels did God ever say,

"You are my Son;

today I have become your Father" ?

Or again,

"I will be his Father,

and he will be my Son" ?

6And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says,

"Let all God's angels worship him."

7In speaking of the angels he says,
“He makes his angels spirits,
and his servants flames of fire.”

8But about the Son he says,
“Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever;
a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom.

9You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness;
therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions
by anointing you with the oil of joy.”

10He also says,
“In the beginning, Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth,
and the heavens are the work of your hands.

11They will perish, but you remain;
they will all wear out like a garment.

12You will roll them up like a robe;
like a garment they will be changed.
But you remain the same,
and your years will never end.”

13To which of the angels did God ever say,
“Sit at my right hand
until I make your enemies
a footstool for your feet” ?

14Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?