# Controversial Christianity

*Bringing compassion, conviction, clarity, and Christ into the controversy.*

1. At NECC, we believe God's Word has something to say about the controversial issues everyone's dealing with.

2. At NECC, we desire to model a better way of discussing these issues.

# Pastoral Support

Have questions relating to our
Controversial Christianity Series?

We're here for you.

Scan QR code to request time to speak with a Pastor.

1. Our Postures, Positions, Perspective
2. Self-Reflection and Lament
3. History of the Sexual Revolution
4. Popular Pushbacks and Biblical Answers
5. Closing Word from Jesus

# Two Key Postures

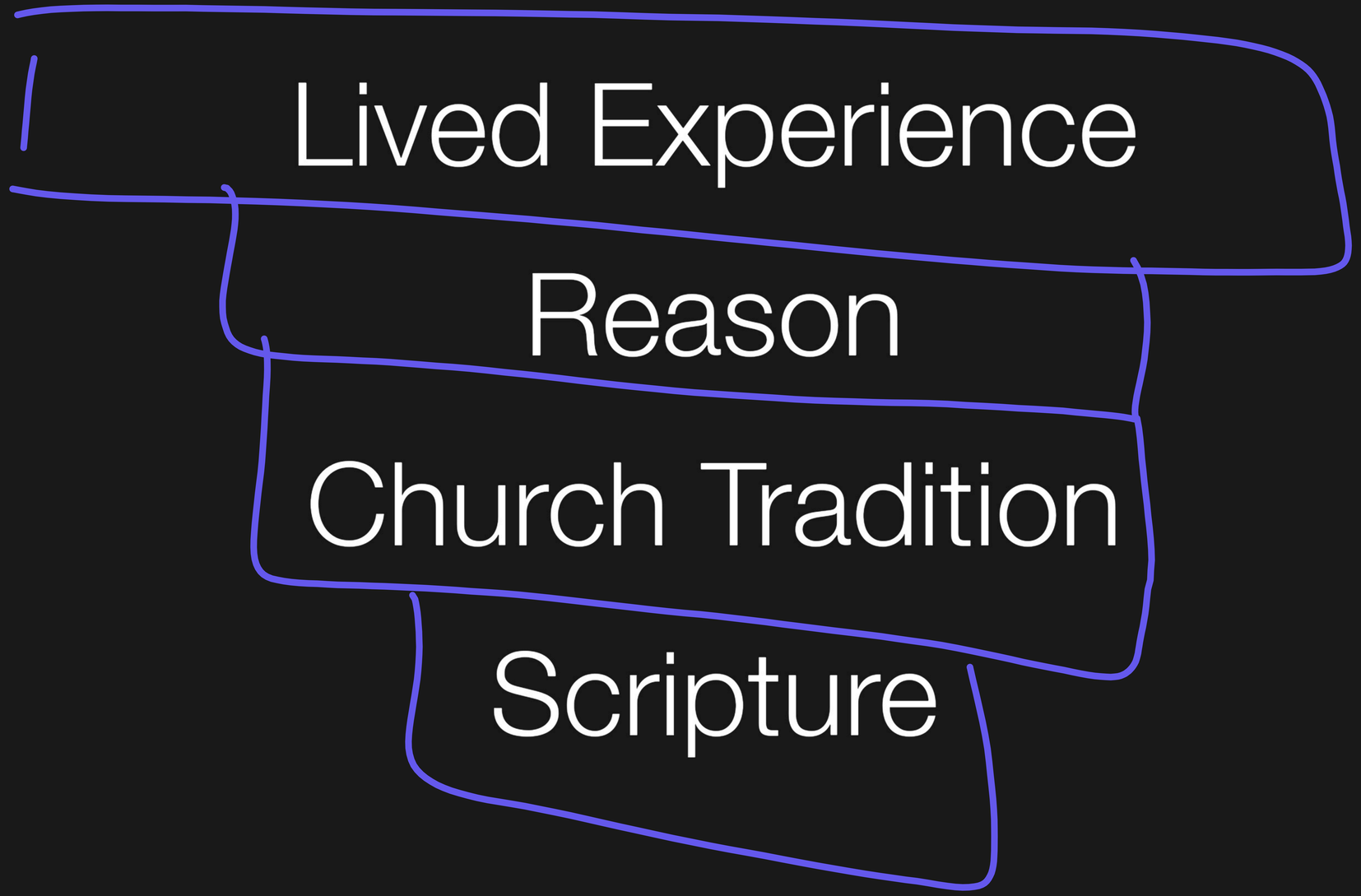
1. We must be liberal with our love ...

2. While conserving the historic Christian ethic on gender and sexuality.

# Seven Key Positions

1. Anything less than compassion isn't Christian.
2. Every Christian is sexually broken.
3. Our identity is most fundamentally in Christ.
4. The Bible teaches that gender-difference is part of how God designed marriage.
5. A life-long covenant between a man and woman is the only God ordained context for sex.
6. When the Bible directly mentions same sex sexual relationships, it always prohibits them.
7. There has been profound consensus across global, multi-ethnic, multi-denominational Christianity for 2,000 years on sexuality.

# Our Perspective - Wesleyan Quadrilateral



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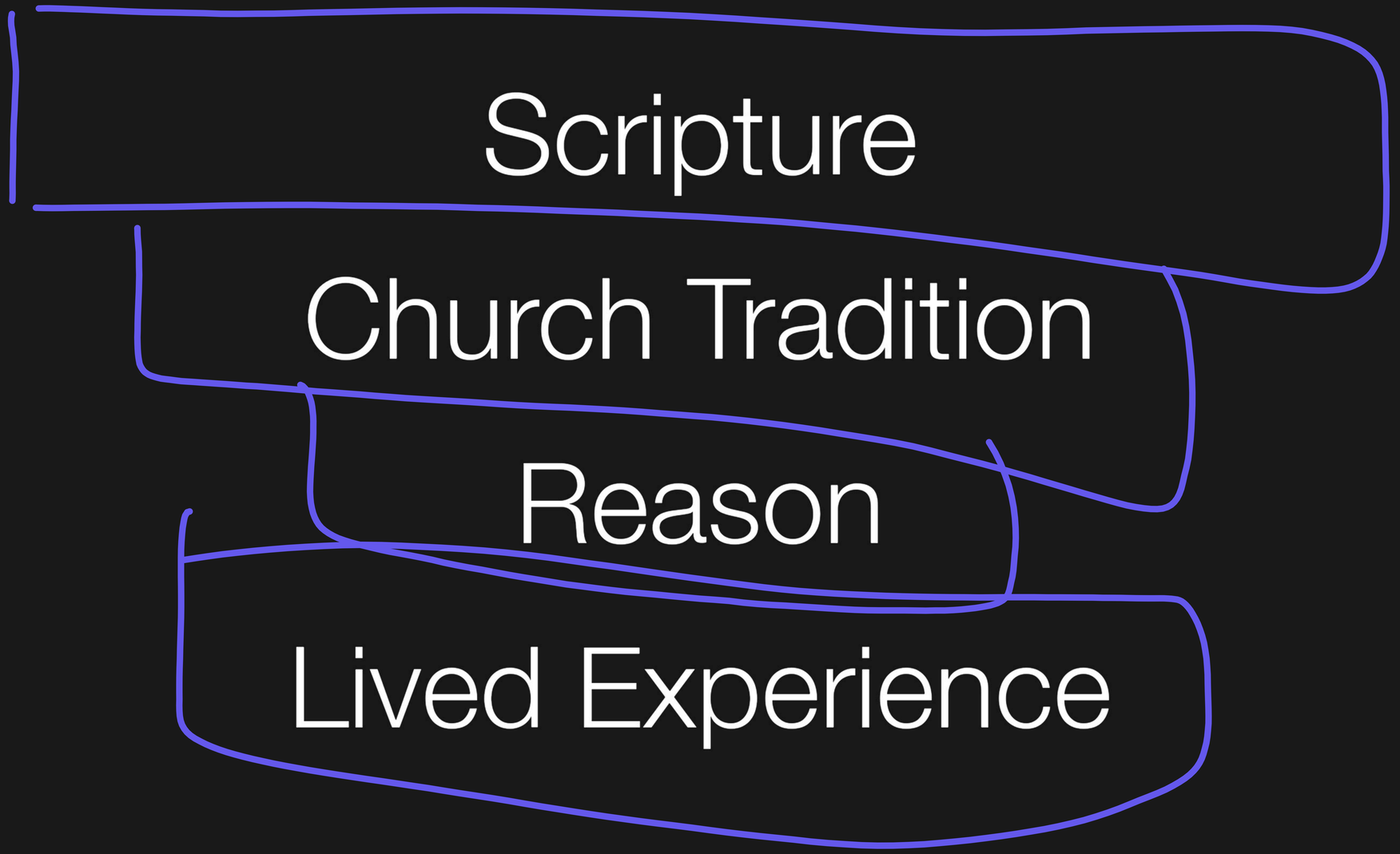

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# Self-Reflection and Lament

- Failing to show empathy and compassion
- Calling same-sex attraction a sin
- Keeping LGB people from relational intimacy

**Ruth 1:16-17 –** “Wherever you go, I will go; wherever you live, I will live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God. Wherever you die, I will die, and there I will be buried.”

**2 Samuel 1:26 -** How I weep for you, my brother Jonathan! Oh, how much I loved you! And your love for me was deep, deeper than the love of women.

**John 13:23 -** The disciple Jesus loved was sitting next to Jesus at the table.

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# Sexual Revolution/Sexual Liberation Movement

*“If we stop making sex such a big deal, it won’t be such a big deal.”*

## Shift #1 - Sex was separated from childbearing.

**1960** – FDA approved “the pill”

**1965** – Griswald v. Connecticut, married couples can buy/use contraceptives w/out govt restriction

**1972** – Eisenstadt v. Baird, legalizes birth control for unmarried

**1973** – Roe v. Wade, constitution protects woman’s right to abortion

**1977** – Carey v. Population Services International, constitutional right to privacy for minors who want to obtain contraceptives

## Shift #1 - Sex was separated from childbearing.

-People began to see sex's primary purpose as pleasure over procreation.

-Laws shifted from protecting the family to protecting people's freedom to have sex without restriction.

## Shift #2 -- Sex was separated from a lifelong marital covenant.

- The main non-religious argument for sex inside of male-female marital contract is the argument for societal flourishing.
- This is communalistic reasoning, not individualistic reasoning.
- The healthy family is the backbone of a healthy society. The family is where a community's citizens are born, and its leaders, military, and workforce are raised. Healthy societies preserve and protect healthy families.
- Data shows societies flourish under three conditions: (1) when marriage is encouraged and strengthened, (2) when sexual impulse is restrained, (3) when parents take responsibility for their children.
- Other studies show that the ideal child-rearing environment, by far, is with the biological mom and dad.

## Shift #3 – Sex was separated from male-female relationships.

- In the 1960s-70s, the morality of same-sex relationships and sexual freedom became a culture war issue.
- The Right framed it up as a moral issue.
- The Left has framed it up as a justice issue.

# 1. Desensitize America.

“To desensitize straights to gays and gayness, inundate them in a continuous flood of gay related advertising, presented in the least offensive fashion possible. If straights can’t shut off the shower, they may at least eventually get used to being wet … If you can get straights to think homosexuality is just another thing meriting no more than a shrug of the shoulders, than your battle for legal and social rights is virtually won.”

# 2. Portray gay people as victims.

“The public should be persuaded that gays are victims of circumstance, that they no more choose their sexual orientation than their height.”

# 3. Frame it as a justice issue.

“Our campaign should not demand direct support for homosexual practices [but] should instead take anti-discrimination as its theme.”

# 4. Vilify the opposition.

“At a later stage of the media campaign … it will be time to get tough with remaining opponents. To be blunt, they must be vilified… Our goal here is twofold. First, we seek to replace the mainstream’s self-righteous pride about its homophobia with shame and guilt. Second, we intend to make the anti-gays look so nasty that average Americans will want to dissociate themselves from such types.”

# 5. Raise money.

“Any massive campaign of this kind would require unprecedented expenditures for months or even years—an unprecedented fundraising drive.”

# The War Conference of 1988

1. Desensitize America.
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# Defense of Marriage Acts (DOMA)

- Passed by the House in 1996
- Defined marriage as "a legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife"
- Declared "spouse" refers "only to a person of the opposite sex who is a husband or a wife"
- Gave states the right to deny marriage to same-sex couples
- Fast-tracked to approval with 342 yes votes v. 65 no votes
- Signed into law by Democrat Bill Clinton

"I believe that marriage is the union between a man and a woman. Now, for me as a Christian, it is also a sacred union. God's in the mix.”
"I am not somebody who promotes same-sex marriage, but I do believe in civil unions."

*Presidential Candidate Barack Obama, 2008*

**United States v. Windsor (2013)**
In a 5-4 vote, the court struck down DOMA's definition of marriage as a "legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife."

**Obergefell v Hodges (2015)**
In a 5-4 vote, the court ruled that states had to recognize gay marriages.

**Shift #1 - Sex was separated from childbearing.**

**Shift #2 - Sex was separated from a lifelong marital covenant.**

**Shift #3 - Sex was separated from male-female relationships.**

**Shift #4 - These shifts were framed as moral progress.**

# Sexual Revolution/Sexual Liberation Movement

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# Popular Pushback

*“Jesus never said anything about LGB issues. I’ll stick with Jesus.”*

# Matthew 19:3-9

Some Pharisees came to Him, and to test Him they asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause?” He answered, “Have you not read that the one who made them at the beginning ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”

Matthew 19:3-9

They said to Him, “Why then did Moses command us to give a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her?” He said to them, “It was because you were so hard-hearted that Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity, and marries another commits adultery.”

# Jesus endorses classic Jewish position on gender & marriage.

- Quote #1 - Gender (G1:27)

“At the beginning of creation God ‘made them male and female’ ”

- Quote #2 - Marriage (G2:24)

“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh”.

**Jewish people allowed disagreement on many issues, but there is no evidence of disagreement on this one.**

- Ex: Pharisees and Sadducees disagree on resurrection theology
- Ex: Lunar v. Solar calendar for celebrating Passover
- Despite many differences, every Jew who wrote on the subject of same-sex relationships five hundred years before and five hundred years after Jesus agreed same-sex relations were against the will of God.
- If Jesus did endorse them, he would have been the only Jewish person in over a thousand years to do so.

# Popular Pushback

Committed, monogamous, LGB relationships didn’t exist back then. Jesus and Paul never heard of anything like what we see today. When the NT condemns same-sex intercourse, it’s condemning prostitution, pedophilia, and other power-driven non-consensual acts.

# A List of Loving, Long-Term Same-Sex Relationships

- Plato's Symposium, in his chapter on Protagorus mentions two men who were lovers more than 10 years after reaching adulthood
- Plutarch, second century, in his Dialogue on Love writes about homosexual love that is beautiful, courteous, and grounded in relationship
- Agathon, famous Greek poet, was known for his physical beauty and also known for dressing as a woman and having a lifelong consensual lover named Pausanias
- Parmenides, Greek Philosopher, was in same sex relationship with Xenon. He was 65 years old.
- Xenophon wrote second century novel An Ephesian Tale depicting a young man named Hypothermus who falls in love with another man of same age named Hyperathenes and remained together for a long time.

“It is clear that some Romans participated in formal Roman ceremonies where men married other men and these men considered themselves joined as spouses.”

*C.A. Williams*

# A List of Loving, Long-Term Same-Sex Relationships

- Iamblichus, third century writer, talks about a marriage between two women.
- Two Jewish documents written shortly after NT forbid female marriages happening in their day.
- Josephus, Jewish historian, writes, “But, then, what are our laws about marriage? That law owns no other mixture of sexes but that which nature hath appointed, of a man with his wife, and that this be used only for the procreation of children.”
- Clement of Alexandria, “Women behave like men in that women, contrary to nature, are given in marriage and marry other women.”
- Ptolemy of Alexandria mentions women who take other women as their “lawful wives”
- Lucian of Samosata says that Megilla “married” Demonassa and Demonassa took Megilla as “her wife.”
- Several archaeological discoveries depict mutual love between women

# Popular Pushback

The term "homosexual" isn’t in the original translation of the Bible. It was added in 1946 to English translations of 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Tim 1:9-10, but it’s an inaccurate translation. There is no Greek or Hebrew term that means homosexual.

# 1 Corinthians 6:9-11

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate [μαλακοὶ - malakoi], nor homosexuals [ἀρσενοκοῖται - arsenokoitai], nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

# malakoi

- literally means soft
- used here to describe a person in context of sinful sexual activity
- Paul never uses malakos in other letters, so we can't crosscheck uses
- if we look at how this Greek word (and Latin equivalent) are used in Greco-Roman world, malakos means "soft" and was most often used to describe men who looked and acted like women

# aresenokoitai

- means men who bed or lie with other men
- a compound word made up of two Greek words: arsen and koite
- arsen simply means “male” and refers to male gender irrespective of age
- koite means“bed” or it can have the verbal force of “to sleep with” in a sexual sense
- other compound words that have koite in them often carry an explicit sexual meaning (ex: doulokoites, metrokoites)
- arsenokoites refers to someone who beds other males

# Popular Pushback

The historic position on marriage is harmful to LGB people.

# Popular Pushback

Aren’t people born gay? Isn’t this just how God created them?

“There is no consensus among scientists about the exact reason an individual develops a heterosexual, bisexual, gay or lesbian orientation. Although much research has examined the possible genetic, hormonal, developmental, social, and cultural influences on sexual orientation, no findings have emerged that permit scientists to conclude that sexual orientation is determined by any particular fact or factors. Nature and nurture both play complex roles. Most people experience little to no sense of choice about their sexual orientation.”

*-American Psychological Association*

# Popular Pushback

Isn’t this like how the church dealt with slavery? You are going to be on the wrong side of history.

**Slavery and Same-Sex Sexual Relationships are not treated the same.**

-Throughout Scripture, there are multiple passages elevating the slave.

-Ex: In Philemon, Paul dignifies and frees Onesimus, the slave.

-Ex: In Romans 16, we see slaves and free leading together.

-There are no exceptions for same-sex sexual relationships.

**Slavery and Same-Sex Intimacy are not treated the same.**

-The redemptive trajectory of the Bible starts with human dignity and quality.

-Christians were the first and greatest champions of abolition, but never championed sexual license.

-The same foundational Genesis 1-2 text that establishes the doctrine of the image of God is the same text that solidifies sex-difference as an essential part of marriage.

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Genesis 1:27-28

So God created humankind in His image, in the image of God He created them; male and female He created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.”

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# Luke 7:36-39

One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to have dinner with him, so Jesus went to his home and sat down to eat. When a certain immoral woman from that city heard He was eating there, she brought a beautiful alabaster jar filled with expensive perfume. Then she knelt behind Him at His feet, weeping. Her tears fell on His feet, and she wiped them off with her hair. Then she kept kissing His feet and putting perfume on them. When the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said to himself, “If this man were a prophet, He would know what kind of woman is touching Him. She’s a sinner!”

## Hebrews 1:1-3

Long ago God spoke many times and in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets. And now in these final days, He has spoken to us through His Son. God promised everything to the Son as an inheritance, and through the Son He created the universe. The Son radiates God’s own glory and expresses the very character of God, and He sustains everything by the mighty power of His command.