

**Reading Schedule
Of
Hebrews
Life-Study Messages
(Two messages/Week)**

2018

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Heb. 1:1-2 God, having spoken of old in many portions and in many ways to the fathers in the prophets,
2 Has at the last of these days spoken to us in the Son, whom He appointed Heir of all things,
through whom also He made the universe;

MESSAGE ONE

A FOREWORD

The book of Hebrews is profound and rich. It is profound in the heavenly concepts and rich in the heavenly inheritance. In our Life-study of Hebrews, we shall be concerned with the profound concepts of this book and with its heavenly inheritance. We need to plunge into the depths of this book.

I. THE BACKGROUND

If we are to enter into the concepts and riches of the book of Hebrews, we must understand the background of its writing. This is crucial. It is difficult for anyone to gain information concerning Hebrews. We are not told the name of the author and it is not clearly mentioned to whom the book was written. Hebrews is absolutely different from all of the other Epistles. It has its own peculiar character. All of the other Epistles begin by telling us by whom and to whom they were written. However, Hebrews begins in this way: "In many portions and in many ways, God, having spoken of old to the fathers in the prophets, has at the last of these days spoken to us in the Son" (1:1-2). Who wrote this book? The Bible does not tell us. To whom was it written? It is altogether a mystery, for the Bible does not tell us that either. This is the reason that very few Christians know this book well.

The Epistle to the Hebrews is not superficial. It is exceedingly deep. So, I say again that we need to plunge into this book. Do not stand on the surface and gaze at it. Dive into it and discover the treasures that are beneath the surface. Whenever you read one verse of this book, you must read its context. For one verse you probably will need to read a few chapters.

A. The Receivers Were Hebrew Believers

Although the book of Hebrews does not itself say to whom it was written, it was written to the Hebrew believers. The saints who collected the divine writings in the early days entitled this book "the Epistle to the Hebrews." This is very interesting. Why does it say "to the Hebrews" and not to the Jews or Israelites?

For many years I was troubled by this word Hebrews. I studied much in the attempt to learn the meaning of this word. I became familiar with different schools of opinion. One school says that the word Hebrew denotes a descendant of Eber, a son of Shem (Gen. 10:21). Since Eber may be spelled Heber in Greek, some Bible students have thought that the Hebrews are descendants of Eber. Although I adopted this school for a while, I did so with a question mark. Later, after further study, I could no longer agree with this school because Eber had more than one son. Eber had two sons, Peleg and Joktan (Gen. 10:25), and Abraham was a descendant of Peleg. If you say that Abraham's descendants should be called Hebrews because they are the descendants of Eber, the same should be true of the descendants of Joktan, Eber's second son. Thus, this school of opinion is illogical. Furthermore, the Bible says that Abraham had two sons, Isaac and Ishmael. If Abraham's descendants are called Hebrews because they are the descendants of Eber, then all the Arabs, who are also descendants of Abraham, should be called Hebrews. But this is ridiculous! Therefore, this interpretation is illogical; it is neither believable nor trustworthy.

After further study, I learned that the word Hebrew was first used in Genesis 14:13, at the time when Abraham was about to fight for the rescue of his nephew Lot. Genesis 14:13 says, "And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew." Abraham was a Hebrew. As a result of considerable study, we discovered that the root of the word Hebrew means "to pass." It especially means to pass over a river from one region to another and from one side to another. Therefore, the word Hebrew means a crosser, a river crosser, one who crosses a river. Abraham was a river crosser. He crossed that great flood (Josh. 24:2-3).

Week 1 – Day 1 (4/9) (Cont'd)

Abraham crossed the Euphrates. The Euphrates is the modern name of that great river which in Hebrew is called Perath. That great river separated the old region out of which Abraham was called from the new land into which he entered.

Abraham was born in Chaldea, the site of ancient Babylon, Babel. Between Chaldea and the good land of Canaan was a great river flowing from north to south. This is very meaningful. All things, including the land, were created by God to fulfill His purpose. The land of Chaldea became satanic, devilish, and demonic. It was a land filled with idols, a land totally usurped by God's enemy and possessed by the evil one. So God intervened to call Abraham out of that idolatrous land, out of that land which had been usurped, possessed, poisoned, corrupted, and ruined by Satan. God simply called Abraham out without telling him where he should go (11:8). Abraham had to look to the Lord step by step, saying to Him, "Lord, where should I go?" Abraham knew what he had to leave, but he did not know where he was to go. Eventually God led him to that great river, and Abraham crossed it. Joshua 24:2-3 says that Abraham "dwelt on the other side of the flood" and that the Lord took him from "the other side of the flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan." Therefore, a Hebrew is a person from the other side of the water.

Now we can understand the real meaning of baptism. Why must all repentant people be baptized? Because the world in which we are has been usurped, possessed, corrupted, and ruined by God's enemy. It is no longer good for the fulfillment of God's purpose. God's salvation is not merely to rescue us from hell to heaven. God's salvation is to bring us out of the land that has been possessed and ruined by Satan. How can we pass out of it? By being baptized. Every baptistery is a great river, a great flood. After you have been baptized, you come out on the other shore. Hallelujah! I am one who has crossed over from the other side. Are you still on the other side? You may be on the other side, but I am on this side. I have crossed the great river. I am a Hebrew, a river crosser. What are you—American, Chinese, British, German, New Zealander, Japanese, Filipino, Mexican? We must all declare, "We are Hebrews! We are typical Hebrews." We are not Jews, but we are Hebrews. We are the true, genuine Hebrews because we have passed over the river. Everyone among us is a real river crosser.

As we have seen, the first river crosser, the first Hebrew, was Abraham. Abraham was called by God and passed over the great river Euphrates, entering into the land where God eventually built His temple. The land which Abraham entered was a good land, a holy land, the land in which God's house was built. God stayed there in His house. It was not His motel; it was His habitation on earth. On the other side were the idols, the devilish things, and all the works of Satan. On this side was God's temple with His shekinah glory. What separated these two sides? A great river.

Even before the time of Abraham there was a man who was a flood crosser—Noah. Noah passed over the flood (1 Pet. 3:20-21). That flood separated him from the old, crooked, perverse, and evil generation. The flood separated him from the devilish world and ushered him into a new land where he built an altar and offered sacrifices. Noah passed over the flood, and Abraham crossed over the great river. The principle in each case is the same.

What about Abraham's descendants? The children of Israel crossed the water of the Red Sea. The principle was the same. After they had crossed the sea and reached the other side, they sang and danced. They could say, "Egypt, you are on the other side. We are on this side!" What did they do after they reached the other side? They built God's tabernacle. They did not engage in business, not even farming, for a period of forty years. There were no schools, sanctuaries, cathedrals, seminaries, or Bible institutes. There was nothing but the tabernacle. What was on the other side of the sea? All the Egyptian, worldly things.

We are people who have crossed over from the other side. What is for us on this side? Churching! We are the water crossers. We are Hebrews. The water has separated us. What are we doing here? We are building the tabernacle, today's ark. The first of the ancient water crossers, Noah, built the ark. The Hebrews in Moses' time built the tabernacle. Now we, today's Hebrews, are building the church.

Our God is "the God of the Hebrews." Have you ever heard this term—"the God of the Hebrews"? Although I have been a student of the Bible for years, I have only recently seen that our God is "the God of

Week 1 – Day 1 (4/9) (Cont'd)

the Hebrews.” For years I have known that God is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and that He is the God of Israel. But the God of Abraham is also “the God of the Hebrews.” He is the God of the river crossers, the ones who have passed over. Exodus 3:6 says, “Moreover He said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.” This word was not spoken to Pharaoh; it was spoken to God’s people, the children of Israel (Exo. 3:15-16). When God spoke to His people, He called Himself the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But notice the difference that occurs when the Lord speaks to Pharaoh. “Then the Lord said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh, and tell him, Thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me” (Exo. 9:1, 13; 7:16). When God spoke to Pharaoh, He called Himself “the God of the Hebrews.” It seems that the Lord was saying, “Pharaoh, don’t you know that I am the God of the Hebrews. I am the God of all the river crossers. Let My people go. Let them cross the Red Sea that they may serve Me in the wilderness. Pharaoh, you must realize that I am the God of the Hebrews.” Our God is “the God of the Hebrews.” We must proclaim to the world that our God is “the God of the Hebrews,” that we are Hebrews, and that we have passed over the water. We, like Noah, Abraham, and the children of Israel, have passed over the water.

When the children of Israel became old in the land of Egypt, God gave them a new start with the Passover (Exo. 12:1-2). God even changed their calendar, changing it from the civil calendar to the sacred calendar. According to the civil calendar, the Passover was in the seventh month, but God called it the first month. It was the beginning of the year, a new beginning. As a result, the people became new and fresh. They crossed the water and entered into the wilderness where they, as a new people, built God’s tabernacle in a new way. However, after forty years, they became old and needed to cross the river once again. Firstly, they crossed the Red Sea; secondly, they crossed the Jordan River and entered into the good land. The crossing of water is very meaningful. After the children of Israel came into the good land, they built God’s temple.

After many generations, the Israelites became old again. They were possessed by the enemy, and even the temple with all of its services was utilized, usurped, possessed, and ruined by the enemy of God. Suddenly, much to the surprise of the Israelites, John the Baptist appeared and told them to repent (Matt. 3:5-6). What did John the Baptist do? He helped them to cross the river. He helped them out of their oldness, out of the old, religious, Jewish land. He told them to cross the river and be a real Hebrew. That was the true meaning of baptism for those repentant Pharisees and Jews. They were baptized out of their old religious land and were baptized into a new region. That baptism was a separation. After they were baptized they could say, “Once we were on the other side of the river, but now we are on this side.”

Not many have had this understanding of baptism. Baptism makes you a real Hebrew, for a Hebrew is a water crosser. Have you crossed the water? You may say, “Yes, I crossed the baptismal water twenty-five years ago.” How are you now? Are you still fresh and new? Doctrinally, I do not teach the matter of burial in water, but experientially I encourage you all to be buried in water. After you were saved and baptized, you wandered in the wilderness for years and became old. Although you have crossed the Red Sea, you now must cross the river Jordan. This water crossing is very meaningful. Consider the children of Israel once again. The first water crossing, that of the Red Sea, delivered them from Egypt. The second water crossing, that of the Jordan, delivered them from wandering in the wilderness and ushered them into the good land. Forget about the traditional teachings that claim that Christians should not be rebaptized and that according to the New Testament baptism should be only once. The number of times depends upon your actual situation. If you have never been in a land possessed by Satan, you do not even need to be baptized once. If you have always been in the heavens, you do not need to be baptized at all. However, since you fell into Egypt, you certainly need to cross the Red Sea. If, after crossing the Red Sea, you immediately enter into the good land, you do not need to cross the river Jordan. But you did not enter the good land immediately. You wandered in the wilderness for a definite period of time. After that wandering you became old. Now, because you have become so old, you must cross a river before entering into the good land. You need to cross the river. If as you read this message you are still old, you need to be renewed as a Hebrew. You need to cross the river.

Week 1 – Day 2 (4/10)

Rev. 15:2 And I saw as it were a glassy sea mingled with fire and those who come away victorious from the beast and from his image and from the number of his name standing on the glassy sea, having harps of God.

Gen. 1:2 But the earth became waste and emptiness, and darkness was on the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was brooding upon the surface of the waters.

In Revelation 15:2 we find a peculiar type of sea, a sea of glass mingled with fire. In this sea is not only water but also fire. When God executed His judgment upon the fallen and condemned creation, He first did it with water. Genesis 1:2 reveals that the pre-Adamic world was judged by water. The world of Noah's time was also judged by water. Water was God's judgment. After the judgment of the flood in Noah's time, God changed His judgment from water to fire. Thus, Sodom and Gomorrah were burned, not flooded (Gen. 19:24). Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, were also judged by fire (Lev. 10:1-2). Eventually, all negative things will flow into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14-15). God's judgment upon the fallen creation, the fallen world, and fallen man is a mingling of water and fire. Hence, in Revelation 15 we have the vision of the sea of glass mingled with fire. Ultimately, this sea of glass mingled with fire will consummate in the lake of fire.

The sea of glass is in front of the throne of God (Rev. 4:6). In the vision of the sea of glass mingled with fire, the overcomers are shown as standing upon the sea. Those who have overcome God's enemy will stand upon the sea of glass. This signifies that they have crossed the water. They all have crossed the sea. For eternity they will be the real water crossers, the real Hebrews. Where are you? I hope that you can say that you are upon the sea of glass. We are the Hebrews. We have crossed the sea. I have the full assurance that I have crossed the water. I am not on the other side. My forefather crossed over from the other side, and I have followed him. Now I am on the sea of glass, and all the negative things are under my feet. The overcomers will be upon the sea of glass just as the children of Israel were upon the seashore having passed through the Red Sea. When the Israelites crossed the Red Sea, they looked back and saw that Pharaoh and all his forces had been drowned in the sea. We, like the Israelites that crossed the Red Sea and sang the song of Moses (Exo.15:1), will sing the song of the Lamb (Rev. 15:3). One day we will be upon the sea of glass and look down and see all the worldly things beneath the sea. Although I know that this will happen in the future, I still hope that it is happening now. We all are here on the sea of glass. We are the Hebrews, the water crossers.

Because we are the real Hebrews, the book of Hebrews is for us. Do not think that only the Jewish believers are Hebrews. We are Hebrews also. We are Hebrews, and this wonderful book of Hebrews is for us. As long as you remain worldly, you are disqualified from receiving this book. As long as you consider yourself as a world dweller, you are through with the book of Hebrews. This book is only for the Hebrews. Since we are the real Hebrews, we have at least one book in the Bible written to us. I am neither Timothy nor Titus, but I am a genuine Hebrew. We all are Hebrews. How we must thank the Lord that the most profound, rich, and deep book is for us! No other book is more profound than Hebrews. God loves His Hebrews. We have crossed the river and we are upon the sea of glass. Surely we can understand such a wonderful book because we have crossed the river. Our God has written such a book to us.

Today our good land is not Canaan; it is the holiest of all. We are now in the holiest of all. Our water crossing has ushered us into this holiest of all. This is our holy land. Where is this holy land, this holiest of all? It is both in the heavens and in our spirit. Between our spirit and the heavens there is the heavenly ladder—Christ, the Son of Man, who joins our spirit to heaven and brings heaven into our spirit. Here we have Bethel, the house of God (Gen. 28:10-22). Here is the habitation of our God (Eph. 2:22). This is the church life. This is our good land.

Look at the tabernacle. In front of it was a laver, a small sea (Exo. 30:18). In front of the temple there was a sea of brass with ten lavers (1 Kings 7:23, 27). Both the laver before the tabernacle and the brass sea with its ten lavers before the temple signified that all the people who entered into the holiest of all had to cross over the water. Eventually, Revelation 15 tells us that in the universe there is a sea of glass in front of

God's temple. Everyone who comes into the presence of God has passed through that sea. We are such a people. We are not in the world and we are not in religion. We are not in Judaism, Catholicism, or Protestantism. We are in the holiest of all. We are in God's habitation, God's house, which is both in the heavens and in our spirit, and Christ is the heavenly ladder that joins them. Hallelujah! Here heaven is open to us. Now not only is the book of Hebrews open to us, but we are open to the book of Hebrews. Now we are ready to probe the riches of this book.

B. Believing in the Lord and Still Wanting to Hold On to Their Jewish Religion

The Hebrews to whom this book was written believed in the Lord, but they still wanted to hold on to their Jewish religion. Are you like this? Can you strongly say that you are not? I am concerned that you may still hold on to something. Perhaps you are clinging to your good experiences in the past, to something that is not the good land. Considering the whole universe, Canaan is just a small spot. You may be in millions of places and not be in that spot. Likewise, you may be in millions of things, but not in the proper spot, which is Christ. As long as you are not definitely, absolutely, and all-inclusively for Christ, you are still holding on to something. I am concerned for many of you. You still hold on to something other than Christ. It may be good, even very good, but it is not Christ. You need to cross the river again. Cross the river and be buried.

C. Persecuted by the High Priest, the Sadducees, and the Pharisees

In A.D. 63 Ananias, one of the high priests in the Jewish religion in Jerusalem, rose up with the Sadducees and Pharisees to persecute the Hebrews. At that time those dear Hebrews appreciated the Lord Jesus, but they were unwilling to forsake their old religion. Eventually, the Lord sovereignly raised up a circumstance which forced them out of it. If they were unwilling to go out, they would be forced out. Perhaps the high priest said, "If you want to remain here with us, you must be like us. Don't be such a Christian—be a Jew. Be a typical Jew. If you want to be a Christian, get out!"

At times our experience is the same. On the one hand, we may appreciate the church life; on the other hand, we may be unwilling to forsake the old things. We may stay where we are. In the fall and winter of 1925 my eyes were opened and I saw the church. However, I did not obey that light so willingly and quickly. I wandered. After two years, some saints with whom I met in the past rose up and said, "If you want to stay with us, be like us. Don't be something else. If you don't want to be like us, then get out!" That was a great help, and I was thankful for it. I got out.

Some saints may see the reality of Christ and realize that the church life is right. However, they have a small "but." That "but" is the tail of the fox. They want to go on, but someone holds their tail. They want to have the church life, but something subtly holds their tail. Nevertheless, even Satan himself has a limit, a deadline. He can hold your tail only for a certain period. Eventually, the religious people will say, "You must have a real turn, or we will kick you out. If you are going to be with us, you must be like us. If not, get out!"

Those Hebrew Christians truly suffered under that persecution. The Jewish religionists robbed them of their property and even threatened their lives (10:34). The Hebrew believers were troubled. Perhaps those Hebrews said to themselves, "If it is right to follow Christ, God would certainly grant us His blessing. But this persecution does not come from the Romans or from the heathen; it comes from the Sanhedrin, the holy council of God's people. Could they be wrong? Maybe we are wrong." The Hebrew brothers were bothered and began to wander. They could not say that what Peter and Paul preached and talked was wrong; neither could they say that the temple, the sanctuary, was wrong. They were in a dilemma, finding it difficult to decide whether to go on or to retreat. It was at this juncture that the book of Hebrews was written to them.

Week 1 – Day 2 (4/10) (Cont'd)

D. This Book Being Written to Confirm to Them the Christian Faith and to Warn Them Not to Deviate from It, but to Forsake Their Jewish Religion

While they were under this persecution and in this situation, the Epistle to the Hebrews was written to them to confirm to them the Christian faith and to warn them not to deviate from it, but rather to forsake their Jewish religion. This Epistle was written to them to tell them to go ahead and not to wander or retreat. They should neither stagger nor hesitate. They must go ahead and cross the river. It seems that the writer of the book was saying, “You are Hebrews, yet you are not willing to cross the separating water. That water is in front of you, and you need to cross it. Christ is not here; He is there. He is the Forerunner. He has already entered into the veil. You shouldn’t stay here. You must go there. He is our Captain and He has entered into glory. Let us follow Him. Let us fight on and on until we enter into glory. Let us go out of the gate and outside the camp and follow Him within the veil.” The two vital slogans of the book of Hebrews are “outside the camp” and “within the veil.” The writer of Hebrews was apparently telling them, “You shouldn’t stagger between the camp and the veil. Go on and enter within the veil immediately. Jesus is neither in the camp nor on the way. He is within the veil. We must go to Him there. That is our goal. Let us all go!” Christ is within the veil. When we get into our spirit, we cross the river out of our wandering minds, pass through the veil, and come into the holiest of all. The Epistle to the Hebrews was written for the purpose of confirming to the staggering Hebrew believers the genuine Christian faith and to warn them not to deviate from it. They had to forsake their Jewish religion.

Heb. 8:1-2 Now in the things which are being said the chief point is this: We have such a High Priest, who sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, 2 A Minister of the holy places, even of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man.

II. THE CONTENTS

A. The Heavenly Christ, the Present Christ, the Christ Now, the Christ Today

This book, with the concept of all positive things being heavenly, points us to the very Christ who is in the heavens. In the gospels is the Christ who lived on the earth and died on the cross for the accomplishment of redemption. In the Acts is the resurrected and ascended Christ propagated and ministered to man. In Romans is the Christ who is our righteousness for justification and our life for sanctification, transformation, conformation, glorification, and building up. In Galatians is the Christ for our living versus the law, religion, tradition, and forms. In Philippians is the Christ lived out of His members. In Ephesians and Colossians is the Christ who is the life, the content, and the head of the Body, the church. In Corinthians is the Christ who is everything in the practical church life. In Thessalonians is the Christ who is our holiness for His coming back. In Timothy and Titus is the Christ who is God's economy for us to behave ourselves in the house of God. In the Epistles of Peter is the Christ who is for us to take God's governmental dealings through sufferings. In John's Epistles is the Christ who is the life and fellowship of the children of God in God's family. In Revelation is the Christ who is walking among the churches in this age, ruling over the world in the kingdom in the coming age, and expressed in full glory for eternity. In Hebrews is the present Christ who is now in the heavens as our Minister (8:2) and our High Priest (4:14-15; 7:26), ministering to us the heavenly life, grace, authority, and power, and sustaining us to live a heavenly life on earth. He is the Christ now, the Christ today, and the Christ on the throne who is our daily salvation and moment by moment supply. This is the Christ revealed in Hebrews. I love this description of Christ. I would do my best to influence you, impress you, and even compel you to love Him.

Here is a little illustration. Consider the chicken eggs we have for breakfast. The outside of the egg is a shell, and inside is the reality of a chicken. You do not eat the shell but the reality of the chicken within the shell. Often a baby chicken will hatch out of the egg, leaving the eggshell behind. In such a case, no one would eat the eggshell. You will forget about the eggshell and cast it into the trash can. This is an illustration of Judaism. Before Christ came, Judaism was an egg. One day, the chicken came out of the egg, meaning that Christ came out of that eggshell. Formerly, the chicken and the shell were one. At that time it was worthwhile to treasure the egg because the chicken was in the egg. One day Jesus was produced. The chicken came out of the shell. Now the chicken is not just walking on earth or soaring in the air; he is sitting in the third heaven. The chicken is there in heaven, and the shell is here on earth. Do not be so foolish as to wonder whether you must go to the chicken or remain with the shell. Certainly you must go to the chicken. Do not stay with the shell.

Let me say a word to the Jewish friends who still attend the synagogue. What you are treasuring is just the empty, broken shell. Forget about that, cast it into the trash can, and come to the chicken. The chicken is Christ. As the chicken, Christ is the life element, the life essence, and the life substance. Why were the Old Testament and Judaism so precious? Because until Christ came out of the shell, He was in them. Now, since He has come out of the shell, you must go to the chicken and not stay with the shell.

This principle may be applied to any religious thing. Baptism is good whenever Christ is in it. But once Christ has been removed from baptism, baptism becomes a shell. Any religious thing without Christ is a shell. We have the Lord's table every Sunday, but if it is merely a table without the Lord in it, it is a shell. Even your Bible or your Bible reading may be a shell if you do not have Christ in it. Your ministry, your preaching, and Christian work might all be shells if they are merely religious activity without Christ. Anything that is fundamental, scriptural, religious and anything that is for God, yet which does not have

Week 1 – Day 3 (4/11)(Cont'd)

Christ as its reality is a shell. Sisters, your head covering should have Christ in it, for without Christ, your head covering is merely an empty shell. Do not think that I am condemning just one thing. I condemn everything that does not have Christ in it. Even my message is a shell if it does not have Christ in it. Even this entire Life-study is a shell if it does not minister Christ.

We all must see how easy it is to have the shell without the chicken. It is very easy. What is religion? Religion is serving God, worshipping God, and behaving yourself to please God without Christ. Worshipping God, serving God, behaving ourselves before God, all are good, but if they are void of Christ they are merely a religion. Such worship, service, or behavior becomes religion. Only Christ is reality. Whatever we do and whatever we are might just be a shell. Some of these things are not even a shell, but even if they are a shell, they are nothing without Christ. We must have Christ! Do you like being an elder? That is fine, but Christ must be in that eldership. If you do not have Christ in your eldership, your eldership is a shell. Whenever you are treasuring a shell, you have to cross the river and bury yourself out of that shell. This is the message of the book to the Hebrews.

Hebrews is a book that is one hundred percent of and for Christ. This Christ is not a doctrinal Christ; He is a Christ today for our experience. Hebrews 1:1-3 tells as that Christ has accomplished everything and that He is now sitting on the right hand of the Majesty on high. Hebrews 4:14 says that He is the High Priest who has passed through the heavens. He has not only crossed over the river, but has passed through the heavens, entering into the third heaven where the holiest of all is within the veil. He is there now. Hebrews 6:20 says that He is the Forerunner. He has run the race, becoming the first to reach the goal. He was the first to enter within the veil. Hebrews 7:26 says that He is such a High Priest because He has become higher than the heavens. He is at the height of the universe. Hebrews 8:1, 9:24, and 10:12 all tell us that the Christ who died is now in the heavens; yet He is present. Oh, how we must come to contact Him! Forsake the shell! Forget the shell! We all must touch this heavenly Christ, this present Christ, this Christ today. He is so real, so living. He is now supplying us with all the heavenly life, authority, and power that we might live a heavenly life on earth. He is not only our daily salvation but also our moment by moment supply. He is such a Christ. We all must know and experience Him. Forget religion! We have the chicken! We no longer have forms or rituals—just reality. This is the content of the book of Hebrews. As we continue in our Life-study, we shall see the depths, the profoundness, and the richness of this book.

B. With All the Heavenly Items

The contents of this book are not only the heavenly Christ, but the heavenly Christ with all the heavenly items: the heavenly calling (3:1), the heavenly enrollment (12:23), the heavenly gift (6:4), the heavenly things (8:5; 9:23), the heavenly holy places (9:24), the heavenly Jerusalem (12:22), and the heavenly country (11:16). We must see all these heavenly things.

III. THE SECTIONS

It is a simple matter to recognize the sections of this book. Firstly, we have the introduction, which shows that God has spoken in the Son (1:1-3). Lastly is the conclusion (13:20-25). Between the introduction and the conclusion, this book shows the superiority of Christ (1:4—10:39) and also reveals the way to take and enjoy this Christ, the way of faith (11:1—13:19). Christ is superior to everything: to the angels, to Joshua, to Moses, and to Aaron. The covenant that He has made is superior to the covenant made with Moses. Christ is superior to everything. The way for us to reach this Christ, the way to take Him, is the unique way of faith. This is the book of Hebrews.

MESSAGE TWO

GOD HAS SPOKEN

The book of Hebrews begins with God speaking. The divine speaking is the opening point of this book. God has spoken! Praise Him! It is absolutely not a small thing that God has spoken. Without speaking God is mysterious. But He has revealed Himself in His speaking. He is no longer mysterious. Now He is the revealed God.

The emphasis of this book is that God, not man, has spoken. Therefore, it does not mention who the writer of this book is, nor, in all its quotations from the Old Testament, does it mention the speakers' names. According to the concept of this book, the entire Scripture is the speaking of God. Hence, when it refers to the Old Testament, it always says that it was the Holy Spirit's speaking (3:7; 9:8; 10:15-17).

We need to consider this matter of God's speaking. If there were a God in the universe, what would be the first thing that He would do? Certainly, before doing anything else, He would speak. If God is living, He must certainly speak. If He is real, His speaking testifies His reality. If He is moving, He will move by speaking. If He is working, He will surely work by speaking.

A living person is a speaking person. If you are a living person, I do not believe that you will be able to be silent for even one hour. If you are at home alone, you will find that you simply must speak. If you do not speak to the angels, you may speak to something or to yourself. A living person must speak.

Our God is living! So our God is speaking, and His speaking testifies that He is living. We know that our God is living because He speaks. How foolish it is to say that there is no God! Have you not heard His speaking? God has spoken! Since eternity, this speaking God has spoken millions of times. If He never spoke, then where did the Bible come from? No one can deny the wisdom expressed in the Bible. If not every sentence, then at least a great many sentences in the Bible could never have come out of a human mind. One great French philosopher has said that if the four gospels were falsehoods and there were no Christ, then the person who wrote the gospels is fully qualified to be Christ. If you do not believe that the writer of the gospels is qualified to be Christ, then you try to write such books. Who can utter things in such a profound and wise way? Peter was a Galilean fisherman and John was a mender of nets. They did not graduate from a university. Where did they get their wisdom? "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God....In Him was life, and the life was the light of men" (John 1:1, 4). Who can utter such simple yet such profound words? Certainly not a little mender of nets from Galilee. Only God Himself can speak in this way. How can you say that there is no God? Can you find another book to compare with the Bible? There is no other book that can compare with it. The Bible is the book among all books because it bears profound wisdom.

Week 1 – Day 4 (4/12)

Gen. 3:1-2 Now the serpent was more crafty than every other animal of the field which Jehovah God had made. And he said to the woman, Did God really say, You shall not eat of any tree of the garden? 2 And the woman said to the serpent, Of the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat;

The Bible also bears light. No other book enlightens people as does this book. Many of you who are reading these messages are very well educated. You have read many books and newspapers. Please tell me, have you been enlightened by any of those books or newspapers? Whenever people read the newspapers, they are darkened, veiled, drugged, doped, and befuddled. However, so many of us can testify that whenever we come to the Bible, regardless of the chapter, the light shines upon us. Light may even shine through such a verse as Genesis 3:1, a verse that speaks about the serpent. Perhaps light may not shine immediately because you are not ready. The light is ready to shine, but you are not ready to open up to it. Eventually, however, the light comes.

Let us use Genesis 3:1 as an example. “Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made.” One morning, a young sister read through this verse and it got into her. As she read that verse early in the morning, she had no understanding of it. Later on in the day, one of her schoolmates came to her with a certain kind of temptation. Immediately, the word came to that young sister, “The serpent was more subtle.” The more her schoolmate talked, the more this word came to her. Eventually this sister said within herself, “Little serpent, get away from me.” Throughout my ministry I have heard hundreds of these kinds of testimonies.

People are enlightened by reading the divine Word. Can anyone testify of being enlightened as a result of reading a magazine or newspaper? There are no such testimonies, because such writings are not the Word of God. But the whole Bible is a composition of the speaking of God, If you put the word Satan in a newspaper, it means nothing, but when you read it in the Bible, especially when you pray-read over it, you are enlightened and Satan is exposed.

Many times we are not only enlightened by the Word, but are enlivened, quickened, and made alive. Try to pray with the words of a newspaper and see what happens. The more you repeat the words, the more you will be darkened and killed. However, when you pray-read the Bible, you are made alive. This is a strong proof that the Holy Bible is God’s speaking. God has spoken! More than a hundred times I have seen great sinners saved just by reading one verse of the Bible. In an instant their whole life was changed. That was the result of the working of the Holy Word.

God has spoken and He is still speaking today. He is speaking to your heart and in your spirit. How do we know that our God is living? Because He speaks to us. How do we know that He is moving and working? Because He speaks. Consider your experience in the past forty-eight hours. Can you say that during that time God has not spoken to you? So many of us can testify that during the past forty-eight hours we have heard God speaking. We know that He is real, living, and moving because He speaks. Where is God? God is in His speaking. He is speaking day by day.

What is God’s speaking? God’s speaking is not only the Word; it is also His breathing. When God speaks, He breathes Himself into us. Whenever God speaks to you, He gets into you. Therefore, whenever you listen to God’s speaking or take the Word of God, you will be involved with God. He bothers us constantly by His speaking. I do not know how many times I have been bothered by Him. If you do not want to get involved with God, you had better close your ears when He is speaking. His speaking is constant. He will never swallow His words. Once He breathes His Word out, He will never take it back. Suppose God says to you, “Go to your wife and apologize to her.” You may argue, saying, “Why must I go to her and apologize? I can’t do it.” But the word continues to come to you, “Go and apologize.” Some who have not obeyed such a word from the Lord have testified that even in their dreams they have expressed His word to go and apologize. The wife is awakened and says, “What do you mean, ‘Go and apologize’?” God spoke to that brother to go and apologize to his wife. He did not do it. So eventually in his dreams he spoke the words, “Go and apologize.” God’s speaking is that constant.

In 1925 I began to hear the Lord's speaking to me. Although for eight years I did not obey Him, that word never left me. Week after week, I argued with God and reasoned with Him. I said to Him, "No, I can't do it." He did not argue with me. When I reasoned, He was quiet. When my reasoning ceased, He began to speak again. I said, "Lord, I've heard this already." Nevertheless, although He did not say a word when I argued with Him, when I was quiet, He spoke again and again for a period of eight years. Eventually I had no choice except to listen to Him and surrender. I obeyed and the speaking stopped. Once we obey, that speaking stops.

Once God's Word has come out of His mouth, no one can send it back to Him. If you do not obey what God speaks in this lifetime, you will obey it in the next. All mankind will believe what God has spoken. If they do not believe it today, they will believe it in eternity.

God has spoken and is still speaking. We know that our God is real because He is speaking. How do we know that God is working in His recovery? Because He is speaking. Although I have been a Christian for many years, I have never heard so much of God's speaking as among us today. First Samuel 3:1 says that the word of the Lord was rare in those days. The King James Version uses the word precious instead of rare. Anything that is rare is precious. In the days of 1 Samuel 3 the Word of God was rare, but it is not rare today. In the Lord's recovery today there is the multiplication of God's Word. There is the abundance of God's Word. God is speaking day after day and meeting after meeting. Do you not realize that He is speaking? His speaking proves that He is working.

Everyone among us has some amount of God's speaking. However, many Christians that are not in the Lord's recovery would say that they do not understand what we are talking about when we say that we have the abundance of God's speaking. Once this matter has been explained to them, they would say, "It has been a long time since I heard God speak." Why is there no speaking of God among so many Christians? Because there is no moving of God among them. There is no working of God.

It is a punishment not to have God's speaking. In the days of 1 Samuel 3, the Word of God was rare. That was a punishment to the family and house of Eli the priest. When you are under God's blessing, God will be speaking every minute. God's speaking to you proves that you are under His blessing. There is an abundance of God's speaking among us in His recovery. Everyone hears His speaking. Is God speaking to you? That means that He is real, living, and moving.

Before many of the sisters came into the Lord's recovery, they had no conviction whatsoever when they were angry with their husbands. They felt that they were angry with their husbands for a good reason and that such anger was altogether right. They could even tell others that their anger was absolutely justified. Now that these same sisters are in the Lord's recovery, they find that God speaks to them immediately whenever they lose their temper. They are no longer free to be angry with their husbands. Now if they become angry with their husbands, God speaks to them about it. If they are angry with their husbands on a Saturday night, they may have no peace to take the Lord's table the next day. This speaking proves that God is moving and working among us.

The living God imparts Himself into us by speaking. During the Life-study of Romans the Lord gave us a good word—transfused. God wants to transfuse Himself into us. This is mainly accomplished by speaking. The more He speaks to you, the more His divine element will be imparted or transfused into your being. The more you are in His speaking, the more you are infused with all of His divine elements. Once you hear His speaking you can never be the same.

Without exception, God's Word brings us three things. The first of these is light. When God speaks, the light shines. The first element with God's Word is light. Where God's Word is, there is light. There is no need for you to expound it or interpret it. The light shines, for the Word bears light. The divine Word is the best illuminator, the best light-bearer. When He speaks, He shines. We can all prove this by our experience. Whenever we hear His Word, we are under His shining, and this shining brings us light. With this light there is the understanding, vision, and the proper wisdom, knowledge, and utterance. Light includes

Week 1 – Day 4 (4/12)(Cont'd)

several things: understanding, vision, knowledge, wisdom, and utterance. When you have light, you have the seeing power, the view, and the vision. When you have light, you have knowledge, understanding, and wisdom. This gives you utterance, and you cannot be dumb. None of the tourists who visit Disneyland in Anaheim are dumb. When they see all the sights that are there, they are bubbling. Once you get into Disneyland, how could you be dumb? Even the little children, who cannot speak well, will have utterance because they see so many things.

Why do the pew members in the Christian denominations sit dumbly in their pews during the Sunday eleven o'clock service? Because they are short of light and see nothing. When you are in darkness, it is very difficult to speak. Try to speak when you are in darkness. You will be dumb because you see nothing. You will have nothing to say. If I am blind and you ask me to speak, I will have nothing to say. How different it is when we are in the light! When light comes, you have a great deal to say because you see so much. You see so many people, places, and things. You see so much that you speak spontaneously.

Light produces seeing, and seeing produces utterance. Why are all the church members so bubbling when they come to the meetings? Because they all have seen something and have something to say as a result. What we see spontaneously comes out in our utterance. There is no need to think of something to say. We talk about what we see. Light produces sight. Light comes from the Word. When you have the Word, you have light.

In my speaking throughout the years, many people have been surprised and have asked me where I get all my messages. My messages all come from the heavenly seeing, from the heavenly holy land tour. Nearly every morning I have a tour and see many things. I have much to say because I see much in the Word. The Word brings in light, light brings in the sight and the vision, and the vision gives the knowledge, wisdom, and utterance. This is not the knowledge in dead letters; it is the life knowledge, the knowledge that is full of life. It all comes from the Word.

The Word also brings us life. The Lord Jesus said that the words He speaks are spirit and life (John 6:63). "In the beginning was the Word....In Him was life" (John 1:1, 4). In the Word is life. When you touch the Word, you are enlivened. Why are we so living? Because of the Word. Throughout the years I have seen many groups of Christians, but I have never seen such a group as are in the church life today. So many of the young ones deal with the Holy Bible day and night. This is a good sign. Some people have spread the rumor that Witness Lee tells people to throw away the Bible. That is a devilish lie! No one charges the saints to take the Word more than this ministry does. Look at the number of verses we use for each message!

Why are the church people so living? It is because of the life that is in the Word. Before you came to the church, you were not very living. You were starved to death. You were lacking the Word. Even now, if you were to keep yourself from the Word, the messages, and the meetings for two weeks, you would be dead. Today so many are living because they are filled with the Word. I am so happy to see that in this age, an age full of evils, the young people have sold themselves to the Holy Word. To so many of you the thing most precious in your heart is the Word. This is a good sign that the Lord is moving among you. His speaking is with us, and His Word is in us. Today everyone in the church life is bubbling because of the Word of life. We have the living Word.

Rom. 4: 17 (As it is written, "I have appointed you a father of many nations") in the sight of God whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls the things not being as being.

Heb. 11:3 By faith we understand that the universe has been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen has not come into being out of things which appear.

The life that is in the Word includes a great deal. It includes holiness, love, humility, kindness, and patience. Life includes all the divine attributes and all the human virtues. We cannot exhaust the richness of life. Who can tell the riches of life? There is no need to speak of the divine life, for even the life in a carnation seed is very rich. It may be a tiny seed with seemingly a small amount of life in it, but it grows. As the carnation seed grows and blossoms, you can see the richness of life. All the riches are in the life. I ask you to consider the life we have, the life we touch. What riches are in the divine life! I have the full assurance to say that all the riches of God are in the church because the Word is in the church and the Word brings life. This life includes all the rich attributes, virtues, and qualities. As long as we have life, we have the riches. Do not try to be humble, for humility is like a bird. If you try to catch it, it flies away. Do not try to love your wife or to submit to your husband. You cannot do it. Simply take the Word. The Word brings life, and this life will issue in love and submission. Humility, love, and submission are all found in this life. We cannot acquire these virtues by our effort or work. They are all in the divine life.

How can we have life? Simply take the Word and life comes. When life comes, every good thing comes with it. In this life is the humility and beauty of a human being. Since God created man in His image, there certainly is beauty in humanity. But this beauty of humanity can only be found in the divine life, and the divine life is in the divine Word. When the Word comes, life comes, and beauty comes with the life. Look at the church people; everyone is handsome and beautiful. If the same people were not in the church life, they would have the appearance of scorpions, turtles, or monkeys. I have truly fallen in love with the church people. Even the older ones are so lovely. This beauty, this loveliness, comes from life, and life comes from the Word. When God speaks, life is there. This life is so rich.

When the Word comes, it also brings power. The Word brings light, life, and power. Many Christians trust in the so-called Pentecostal things. I also fully believe in the Pentecostal things, but not in the so-called "Pentecostal" way. Many say that if you do not have a certain "Pentecostal" experience, you do not have power. I do not agree with this. In my home town, very close to the church meeting place, was a Pentecostal meeting place. After ten years, they were less than a hundred in number. They practiced the "Pentecostal" things and claimed to have power. The church meeting place, however, was always crowded. One day, a leader from that Pentecostal group talked with me. I said, "Brother, according to your opinion, you have the power and we do not. But look at the facts. How few you have! How many we have here!" Power is with the Word.

When we preach the living Word, the power is there. This power is not the instant power; it is the constant power. It is not the mushrooming power; it is the growing power. During the past years I have seen many mushrooming movements. One night a hundred repent, but after two months you can only find a few of them. What we are doing in our labor is like sowing a little carnation seed. It seems that after two weeks nothing has happened. Gradually a green sprout appears. Eventually, it blossoms, produces seed, and a second reproduction occurs. This is the power of life.

In the churches in the Lord's recovery we have no mushrooming developments. If the brothers in a certain locality would claim to have gained three thousand people in a week, I would say, "Let us wait and see. After a short time, most of them will disappear." We like to see the Word being sown and grown in the church field. Year after year it will grow and reproduce. You wait and see. Nothing will last so prevailingly as what is in the churches. It will be prevailing and it will endure forever because the power here is nothing other than life. This life comes from the Word. The Word brings in life, and life remains and reproduces. If the Lord would take me away from this country, I would have the complete assurance that the Lord's recovery in this country would still go on because it is not a movement of man's doing. It is a move of the divine life growing. The seed has been sown here, the Word has come, and life is here.

Week 1 – Day 5 (4/13)(Cont'd)

Hallelujah! Where the Word is, there is power in life. Now we can see why God speaks. He speaks to shine, to enliven, and to empower.

I. TO THE FATHERS

God speaks in two stages: to the fathers and to us. Of old, He spoke to the fathers; in these last days, He speaks to us. Before God spoke to men, He spoke to nothing. He spoke to that which was not being. At that time there was nothing; so He spoke to nothing. By His speaking He called things not being as being (Rom. 4:17, Recovery Version). He spoke, “Light!” and light came into being. The whole universe was created by His speaking, by His Word. The whole universe was framed by the Word of God (11:3). “He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast” (Psa. 33:9). God worked by speaking. The real working of God among us today is His speaking. If God does not speak among us, we can do nothing regardless of how much we work. If God does not speak, the elders and the leading ones in the churches can do nothing. But when He speaks, we must say, “Praise the Lord!” God speaks to nothing, yet something comes. He calls things not being as being. By His speaking everything came into being. The whole universe was made by His word. After this, mankind came into being.

After man was created, God spoke to the fathers. He spoke to the fathers of old in the prophets and in many portions and in many ways (1:1). In the Old Testament, God spoke to people not once for all and only in one way, but in many portions and in many ways: in one portion to the Patriarchs in one way; in another portion through Moses in another way; in one portion through David in one way; in other portions through a number of prophets in several different ways. Even the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament, contains many different portions. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy—each book is a different portion and each book has many portions. Have you ever seen any writing that is as rich as the Bible? The Old Testament has various portions: the histories, the chronicles, the Psalms, the Proverbs, and many different prophets. Some books are long, more than sixty chapters; others are short, only a few chapters. All the different ways of speaking have been exhausted by the Bible: the way of prophecy, type, shadow, pre-figure; the way to use the women, the serpent, the man, the lion, the scorpion, and the lamb, the water, the sun, the moon, the stars, and different kinds of trees and plants; clear words, illustrations, proverbs, parables, allegories, and types. Every way of utterance has been used in the Scripture. When God spoke to Moses, He did not do it through a clear word, but through a bush that was burning yet was not burnt (Exo. 3:1-6). That was a most wonderful way of speaking. Moses understood by it that there was no need for him to be burnt. He needed to be burning, but he did not need to be burnt. God was not going to use him as the fuel. A little burning bush spoke a great deal to Moses. That was the way in which God spoke to Moses. Oh, the wisdom in the Bible! The most simple things are used in a profound way for God’s speaking. Truly God has spoken in many portions and in many ways.

II. TO US

A. At the Last of These Days

Hebrews 1:2 uses the phrase at the last of these days. This may also be rendered “the end of these days.” This is a Hebrew expression indicating the end of the dispensation of law, with Messiah introduced (Isa. 2:2; Micah 4:1).

B. In the Son

In the last of the days God spoke and still speaks in the Son.

1. Being the Word

The Son is the Word (John 1:1; Rev. 19:13). “In the beginning was the Word...and the Word was God.” He was God’s Word for God’s speaking. The Son is altogether the Word for the speaking of God.

2. Declaring God the Father

The Son's being the Word is mainly to declare God the Father (John 1:18), that is, to declare, define, express, and reveal God. The more the Son speaks, the more God is expressed and revealed.

3. Conveying Life

The whole Person of the Son is the divine speaking. The Son as God's Word and God's speaking constantly conveys life to us. As the Word, He bears life. He always conveys life to us. When we receive Him, we have life.

4. Revealing Reality through the Spirit

As the divine Word for the divine speaking, the Son reveals reality through the Spirit (John 16:12-15). Reality is all that God is to us. This reality is revealed to us by the Son as the Word through the Spirit.

C. In the Son as the Spirit

1. Speaking to the Churches

Whenever the Son speaks, He is the Spirit. The speaking Son is the Spirit. The Son of God is the Word. When the Word voices, it becomes the Spirit. This is proved by the seven epistles in Revelation 2 and 3. At the beginning of each epistle, it says that the Lord is speaking, but at the end it says that we should hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches. This proves that whenever the Lord Jesus speaks He is the speaking Spirit. Whenever the Son is speaking, it is the Spirit speaking. If you consider the seven comparisons in Revelation 2 and 3, you will see that whatever the Son speaks is the speaking of the Spirit (Rev. 2:1 cf. 7; 2:8 cf. 11; 2:12 cf. 17; 2:18 cf. 29; 3:1 cf. 6; 3:7 cf. 13; 3:14 cf. 22). We have the Son who is the Word of God. He is not only the Word of God, but also the speaking of God. Whenever He speaks, He is the speaking Spirit. "The words which I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life" (John 6:63).

2. Speaking with the Church

Today the Son as the speaking Spirit is speaking with the churches. He not only speaks to the churches but also with the churches. Revelation 22:17 says, "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come." At the beginning of the book of Revelation it is the Spirit speaking to the churches, but at the end of Revelation it is the Spirit speaking with the churches because the speaking Spirit and the church have become one. Hallelujah! This is God's speaking.

Study Questions

1. What does the term "Hebrews" mean and why was this epistle written to them?
2. Describe the content of this book

Week 2 – Day 1 (4/16)

Heb. 1: 8 But of the Son, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Your kingdom.

John 1:18 No one has ever seen God; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.

MESSAGE THREE

THE SON

God is mysterious. He is altogether a mystery. But this mystery has been revealed by God's speaking. Without the divine speaking, God would remain forever unknowable. But our God no longer is mysterious. He is not a mystery, but a story. The story of God is absolutely a matter of speaking. God has a history, and His history is a speaking story. We can tell the story of God. The story of God is a matter of continual speaking; it is a speaking history.

Firstly, God spoke through some people who were chosen and moved by Him. He spoke in various ways through Adam, Abel, Enosh, Enoch, Noah, and Abraham. After Abraham, God spoke through Moses and many other chosen ones— priests, kings, and prophets. Everyone who spoke for God, whether he was a king or a prophet, was motivated by God's Spirit. Therefore, the history of God is a history of speaking.

After God spoke through so many different kinds of people, through high and low, educated and uneducated, kings and shepherds, His speaking was still insufficient. Regardless of how much these people were used to speak for God, their speaking was not adequate. God had to speak by Himself directly. So He came in the person of the Son. Hebrews 1:2 says that God has spoken to us in the Son. According to the Recovery Version of Hebrews, in 1:1 there is a definite article before the word prophets. However, in 1:2 the definite article before Son is in italics, indicating that this word is not in the Greek text, but that it is necessary for the sake of English idiom. In the English language it is difficult to say, "God spoke to us in Son." Some of the better versions say, "God has spoken to us in the person of the Son." Even the Amplified Version uses the phrase in the person of a Son. This means God Himself speaks in the person of the Son. Formerly He spoke through the prophets; now He speaks in the Son. We must see that the Son is different from all the prophets. All of the prophets were men used by God to speak for Him, but the Son is God Himself speaking. Verse 2 says that God has spoken to us in the Son, and verse 8 tells us that the Son is God. This indicates that God speaks in Himself. In verse 2 it seems that God and the Son are two, for it says that God spoke in the Son. But in verse 8 it is evident that the Son and God are one, for the Son is addressed, "O God." To say that God has spoken in the Son means that God speaks in Himself.

In the four gospels the Son came. He came to speak God, not only with clear words, but also with what He was and what He did. He is altogether the Word of God and the speaking of God. Sometimes He spoke with words and other times He spoke with actions. All that He was and all that He did spoke God. "No one has ever seen God; the only begotten Son, Who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him" (John 1:18).

The Son is the Word, the speaking, the expression, and the definition of God. When the Son speaks, His word is the Spirit (John 6:63). Eventually, to the churches, He is the speaking Spirit. At the beginning of each of the seven epistles in Revelation 2 and 3, the Son speaks, but at the end of each epistle, it is the Spirit speaking to the churches. God speaks in the Son, and when the Son speaks to the churches, He is the speaking Spirit. By His speaking the churches will become one with Him. At the end of Revelation the Spirit and the church speak as one (Rev. 22:17). God speaks in the Son, the Son becomes the speaking Spirit, and the speaking Spirit is one with the church speaking for God. This is the speaking history of our God, a history that is a speaking story.

This speaking story is recorded in the Bible. The entire Bible is a history of God. As we have seen, this history is a speaking story. When God created all things, He did so by speaking. When He contacted

humanity in the Old Testament times, He did it by speaking in the prophets. When He came to mankind in the New Testament age, He spoke in the Son, in the Person of the Son as His Word. How does He come into the churches today? By speaking as the speaking Spirit. By speaking as the Spirit, He makes Himself one with the churches. Eventually, this speaking story not only consists of Himself, but also of all the churches. Meeting after meeting, the church life is a speaking story. We are a speaking people. By this speaking God is transfused into people. By this speaking so many human beings are being infused and saturated with the divine element. This is the church life. This is God speaking.

The book of Hebrews is a book of God's speaking. The essence of the letter to the Hebrews is God speaking in the Son. God speaks in the Son, the Son speaks as the Spirit to the churches, and ultimately the Spirit speaks with the church. It is altogether by this speaking story that God is brought into man and man is brought into God. God and man, man and God, become one. This is the wonderful church life.

I. HIS PERSON

Now we are ready to see the Son. Hebrews chapter one reveals two main things concerning the Son—His person and His work.

A. The Effulgence of God's Glory

The writer of the letter to the Hebrews, being absolutely in the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, had the wisdom to say that the Son is the effulgence of God's glory (1:3). The effulgence of God's glory is like the shining or brightness of the rays of the sun. The Son is the shining, the brightness of God's glory. Can you separate the effulgence from the glory? This is like separating the shining of the sun from the rays of the sun. It cannot be done, for the shining and the rays are one. Consider the example of electric lights. Can we say that light is one thing and electricity is another? Absolutely not. Light is simply the expression of electricity. Electricity is a mystery. Has anyone ever seen electricity? Although it is a mystery, it is nevertheless a reality. How can you tell that electricity is in a certain room? By looking at the lights. Light is the effulgence of the glory of electricity. Likewise, we should never consider the Son as separate from God. The Son is the expression of God Himself.

There are some so-called Christians who do not believe that Christ is God. That is the greatest blasphemy against the Lord Jesus. Our Lord is nothing less than God. He is God Himself. When I was in Manila in 1950, a group of so-called Christians who do not believe that Christ is God was very prevailing there. Some of their people turned to the Lord's recovery. One day four representatives from that group came to see me: two attorneys, one medical doctor, and a teacher. They came with their Bibles to try to defeat me. The first question they asked was, "Mr. Lee, how can you say that Christ is God?" I replied, "How can you say that Christ is not God? You answer me first and then I'll answer you. Tell me where it says in the Bible that Christ is not God." They answered, "We cannot show you a verse that says that Christ is not God. Nevertheless, you should not guess that Christ is God." I told them that I was not guessing and proceeded to quote John 1:1. Immediately they said, "This verse says that the Word was God, but it does not say that Christ is God." I said, "What kind of people are you? Do you have a sound mind? Tell me, who is the Word?" They answered, "The Word is the Word. The Word is not Christ." Then I said, "Don't you have verse 14 which says that the Word became flesh?" They replied, "That is the flesh. That is not Christ." I said, "I do not have time for this kind of twisting. What you speak is nonsense." Although they tried to be devilishly humble with me and asked me to be patient with them, I said, "I don't want to hear you. You speak nonsense. You don't have a sober mind. Every sober mind understands that in the beginning was the Word, that the Word was God, that this Word became flesh, that this flesh was named Jesus, and that Jesus is God. But what you speak is absolute nonsense." They were exposed and defeated. Some of the members of that group came to see that they did not have the truth, that what they had was falsehood.

We all must realize that our Lord Jesus is God. Do not consider that He is anything other than our God. He is God. Thus, 1:3 says that He is the effulgence of the glory of God.

Week 2 – Day 2 (4/17)

Heb. 1: 3 Who, being the effulgence of His glory and the impress of His substance and upholding and bearing all things by the word of His power, having made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

B. The Express Image of God's Substance

The Son is also the express image of the substance of God (1:3). The glory is the outward expression and the substance is the inward essence. God has His essence, His substance, as well as His appearance. God's essence is His substance. For example, a table is substantial. It has a substance, which is wood. Wood is the essence of the table. Likewise, our God is substantial. He has substance as well as glory. We do not have the adequate words to explain these things. We can only say that our God is glorious and substantial. As far as God's glory is concerned, the Son is the effulgence of this glory. As far as God's substance is concerned, the Son is the express image of this substance.

The express image of God's substance is like the impress of a seal. A seal has an image. When the seal is pressed upon the paper, the paper bears the same express image. Suppose a seal has the letters USA. When the seal is pressed upon a piece of paper, the paper bears the same image as the seal. The Son is not only the effulgence of God's glory, but He is also the impress of God's substance. This means that the Son is God coming to us. When I hold the seal in my hand, the seal is there. When I put the seal upon you, the seal comes to you. Wherever you go, you bear the impress of the seal. When God does not come to you, He is just God. When God comes to you, He is the Son as the impress of His substance.

Our Christ is God coming to us. He is our God reaching us. How can the sun reach us? By the shining of its rays. If you think that there is no sun, you should stand outside for fifteen minutes at noontime. The sun will burn you because the rays of the sun reach you. This means that the sun reaches you. Who is the Son? The Son is God reaching us, God coming to be one with us. Many times people say, "Let us bathe in the sunshine." After they take a sunbath, some element of the sun is transfused into them. This means that the sun reaches them. Likewise, Christ, the Son of God, is God Himself reaching us and coming into us. We do have a God who reaches us, a God who comes into us. This is our salvation, the great salvation revealed in chapter two. Our great salvation is God reaching us and coming to us. This is the Son of God.

C. God Himself

Hebrews 1:8 reveals that the Son who is the effulgence of God's glory and the express image of God's substance is God Himself. Verse 8 says concerning the Son, "Your throne, O God." This reveals that the Son is God Himself.

D. The Lord

Verse 10 reveals that the Son is the Lord, the Creator. "And, You in the beginning, Lord, have founded the earth, and the heavens are the works of Your hands." Christ, the Son of God, is God Himself, as well as the Lord, the Creator. Do not think that He is other than the Lord, the Creator. He is God and the Lord, the Creator.

II. HIS WORK

We come now to the work of the Son. In 1:2-3 two categories of the Son's work are revealed: creation and redemption.

A. In Creation

1. Creating the Universe in the Past

Hebrews chapter one reveals that the Son created the heavens and the earth (1:2, 10). All things came into existence through the Son (John 1:3; Col. 1:16; 1 Cor. 8:6). The Son is the Creator of the universe.

2. Upholding All Things in the Present

After creating all things, the Son became the Upholder (1:3). The earth is suspended in the air. There are no columns supporting it. After Christ created the earth, He began to uphold it. He upholds it by the word of His power. If you ask the scientists who holds the earth, they will say that something upholds it. The earth is one of many planets. The astronomers tell us that all the planets move according to their own track. If they were to move out of orbit, there would be a global accident. Who upholds the universe? The Son. He upholds the universe very easily. He does not do anything—He just speaks. He upholds all things by the word of His power.

Hebrews is a book on the word of God. In 11:3 we are told that the universe was framed according to the word of God, and in 1:3 we see that the universe is upheld by the word of power. The divine word is very meaningful. The Son is not only the Creator, but He is also the Upholder. He created and upholds the universe by His word.

3. Inheriting All Things in the Future

In the past, He was the Creator; in the present, He is the Upholder; and in the future, He will be the Heir to inherit all things (1:2). The sun, earth, solar system, stars, galaxies—all are His. All things are for Him. He will inherit all things. In God's creation He is the Creator, the Upholder, and the Heir. All things are of Him through Him, and to Him (Rom. 11:36).

B. In Redemption

1. Having Purified Sins in the Past

In God's redemption there are also three time periods. Firstly, the Lord purified our sins in the past (1:3). He has not only atoned for our sins, but also made purification of them. Atoning means covering, but purification means that our sins have been washed away. In the type of the Old Testament, the atonement was only able to cover sins (Psa. 32:1), but unable to take them away. So the atoning priests stood daily, offering the same sacrifices, and could never sit down (Heb. 10:11). But the Son has taken away sin (John 1:29) and has accomplished the purification of sins once for all. Therefore, He sat down forever (Heb. 10:10, 12). In the eyes of God, sin is over. In the eyes of God, throughout the whole universe, sin has been washed away. Sin should not be in you, in the church, or in your home. Sin has been washed away, and the purification of sin has been accomplished. The Son completed this work in the past.

Week 2 – Day 3 (4/18)

Heb. 1:13 But to which of the angels has He ever said, "Sit at My right hand until I set Your enemies as a footstool for Your feet"?

8:1 Now in the things which are being said the chief point is this: We have such a High Priest, who sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,

2. Sitting at the Right Hand of God in the Present

What is the Son doing now? He is sitting, resting. He is enjoying some excellent sight-seeing. He is sitting on the right hand of God, watching His lovers and seekers experience His purification of sin. He is not doing anything there—He is just sitting. At least five times the book of Hebrews tells us that the Lord Jesus is sitting (1:3, 13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2). He has no work to do. He does not need to wash you again, for He has thoroughly washed you already. Before you even made your confession, He already washed you. In fact, you were washed before you were born. Now the Lord has nothing more to do. This is much better than the work of the priests.

3. Waiting for the Subduing of the Enemies in the Future

The Lord is waiting for His enemies to be subdued. This will occur in the future. The Lord lacks nothing except a footstool. He has the throne and the crown, but He does not yet have the footstool. He is only waiting for this. Be assured that one day He will obtain this footstool.

The book of Hebrews stresses the fact that Christ has accomplished everything for God and us, leaving nothing for us to do. His sitting at the right hand of God signifies that His work has been accomplished and that He is resting there, waiting only for one thing—that God will make His enemies a footstool for His feet. He is sitting there in the heavens waiting for a footstool that He may have complete rest.

In the Old Testament God spoke in the prophets, in men moved by His Spirit (2 Pet. 1:21). In the New Testament He speaks in the Son, in the person of the Son. The Son is God Himself (1:8), God expressed. God the Father is hidden; God the Son is expressed. No one has ever seen God; the Son as the Word of God (John 1:1; Rev. 19:13) and the speaking of God has declared Him and has been His full expression, explanation, and definition (John 1:18). The Son is the center, the focus, of the book of Hebrews. In the Godhead He is the effulgence of God's glory and the express image of God's substance. In creation He is the means through whom the universe was made, the power that upholds all things, and the Heir appointed to inherit all things. In redemption He has accomplished the purification of sins and is now sitting on the right hand of God in the heavens waiting for the subduing of His enemies.

The book of Hebrews reveals the contrast between the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament was of the law in letters and forms; of man, earthly, temporary; and by sight, issuing in a religion called Judaism. The New Testament is of life, spiritual, heavenly, permanent, and by faith, focused in a person who is the Son of God.

MESSAGE FOUR

CHRIST AS THE SON OF GOD—AS GOD

SUPERIOR TO THE ANGELS

The book of Hebrews is a book of comparisons. It compares God's economy in Christ with the Old Testament things. A good number of the Hebrew believers, to whom this book was written, appreciated faith in Christ and the salvation in Christ, but they also appreciated their old religious background, which was established by God according to the Old Testament. It was not heathen or pagan. It was not an invention of human imagination; it was established according to God's oracles. God had told their forefathers to set up the temple rites and rituals and the Levitical service. Thus, it was commanded,

established, and even blessed by God. The Hebrew believers came out of such a background. But since they had also seen something in Christ, they were troubled. We would feel the same way if we were in their situation. The Hebrew believers were bothered by these two ends—Christ and their old background. Both were of God and now they had to make a choice between them. The Hebrew believers were hesitating on the bridge. They had not left the other side, but rather were on the edge of the border. They were being called to go on, to cross the river, to pass over. They were not involved in idolatry, for the holy temple had been erected for the purpose of worshipping the God of their forefathers. In the Levitical service, the priests offered the sacrifices ordained by God and burned the incense as He had required. It was difficult for the Hebrew believers to completely give this up. They held these two ends with their two hands, holding Christ in the one hand and their forefathers' religion in the other. This was the background of their situation.

In addition to this, they faced problems in their environment. A persecution was raised up against them. Although they loved their old religion, the high priest in that religion took the lead to persecute them, making their situation very clear. Perhaps he said to them, "If you want to be an Israelite, stay with us. Forget about Christ and the Christians. If you want to be with the Christians, you must leave us. Get out! We will not even allow you to have your living among us." That was the situation of the Hebrew believers when the book of Hebrews was written to them.

In this letter we see the wisdom of the Lord's Spirit. He did not rebuke them. There is no rebuking spirit, no rebuking word, and no rebuking tone. Rebuking does not work very well. The Lord the Spirit chose the best way to help them—the way of making a comparison. The best way to help our children is to give them a comparison. Let them compare white with black, Christ with religion, the church with the world, heaven with hell, and then let them make their choice. This was the way taken by the writer of this book. In a full way, he presents what is in God's economy, showing the superiority of Christ as compared with their old religion. That religion served as a black background. Without a black background, the white will not appear to be so white. In order to show the whiteness of white you need a black background. Remember this principle: in the book of Hebrews there is always a comparison.

What are the main items in Judaism, the things that the Jewish forefathers held as treasures? In Judaism, the typical and genuine religion formed and established according to the Old Testament, the major item is God. God is their boast (Rom. 2:17). In no other religion do people have such a God. Buddhism, for example, is nonsense and should not even be called a religion. Religion helps people to worship God, to serve God, and to behave in a manner pleasing to God. There is no God in Buddhism, only a dumb Buddha. According to Buddhism, everyone can become a Buddha. Buddhism teaches that if you behave yourself, eventually you will become a Buddha. This is absolutely devilish.

Likewise, the teachings of Confucius should not be considered as a religion. Confucius never taught religion. His teachings are altogether ethical. In his teachings on ethics and morality, Confucius only mentioned God a few times. He simply advised people not to offend God, for, if they did, there was no way to be forgiven.

Week 2 – Day 4 (4/19)

Acts 7: 52-53 Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand concerning the coming of the righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become, 53 You who received the law as ordinances of angels and did not keep it.

We may now consider Islam. The Koran, the sacred book of Islam, is a counterfeit of the Old Testament. It is subtle. It mentions God and contains the history of Genesis. But it is altogether a counterfeit.

The genuine and true God is with the Jewish religion, for it is the genuine and typical religion. In a sense, they have the real God. This God is their boast. Even today Judaism still boasts in its God.

Secondly, Judaism has angels. The heathen religions all have demons. There is no comparison between the angels and the demons. The Bible indicates that the angels are very close to God. When the Lord appeared to Abraham, He appeared with two angels (Gen. 18:1-2). They looked very much alike. By this we can see how high the angels are. Even the law was given through the mediation of angels (Acts 7:53; Gal. 3:19). So the Jewish religion boasts in them.

Thirdly, the Jewish religion boasted in Moses through whom God's law was given. In nearly every race, especially in ancient times, there were outstanding leaders. But he was the foremost leader among all human leaders. No one's writings can compare with his writings. There is no need to consider all of the books of the Pentateuch written by Moses; it is sufficient to present only one, Deuteronomy. This book is incomparable; it is in the third heavens. All other books outside the Bible are either on the surface of the earth or are in the lowest hell. The writings of Moses are high. I truly love all the books that he wrote, especially Deuteronomy which is so sweet and tender. What depths there are in the five books written by Moses! These books are gold mines. The more you dig in them, the more treasures you find. They are fathomless. So all Jewish people boast in Moses.

The fourth item is the priesthood with Aaron, the elder brother of Moses, as the head. Moses was not a priest; he was an Old Testament apostle. Aaron was a high priest. Moses was sent from God to the people, and Aaron went from the people back to God. Moses typified Christ coming from God to the people, and Aaron typified Christ going from the people to God. The Jews have such a priesthood which serves God and takes care of the peoples' needs in the presence of God.

In a sense, the priests were not only ministers, but also attorneys of law in the heavenly court. How good it is to have an attorney to take care of your case continually. The Jewish people had their priestly attorneys. Today, if people do not have an attorney, they have no protection, but if they are under the care of a good attorney, they can be at peace. The heathen had no attorney before God to take care of them, but the Jews had priests before God as their attorneys. Those priests served God and took care of the cases of the children of Israel. Therefore, the Jews could boast in their priests.

The fifth and last main item of which Judaism could boast was the old covenant made by God with the Jewish people. The Jews are God's people according to God's covenant made according to God's law. They are God's covenanted people. No other people on the earth has such a divine covenant that they may be God's people according to God's desires and requirements. Only the Jews have such a divine covenant that makes them a particular people to God. So they hold it as a treasure and boast in it.

The intention of the book of Hebrews is to show the Hebrew believers the superiority of God's economy over Judaism. In Judaism the boast was God, angels, Moses, Aaron the high priest, and the old covenant with its services. The writer uses these five items as the basis for making a comparison. He firstly points out that in God's economy the first superior thing is not only God, but God expressed, that is, God the Son (1:2, 3, 5, 8-12). Then he goes on to unfold that Christ is superior to the angels (1:4—2:18), to Moses (3:1-6), to Aaron (4:14—7:28), and that the new covenant of life made by Him is superior to the old covenant of letters (8:1—10:18).

The first comparison that this book presents is the comparison between the God in His salvation and the God in the Jewish religion. The Jewish religion has the true God, but in Judaism He is the hidden God. In God's salvation, on the contrary, God is expressed. This expressed God is God the Son. God the Son is the expression of God. When the apostle John was in the Jewish religion before he was saved, he could never say, "We beheld His glory." But when he wrote his gospel, he said that in the beginning was the Word, the Word was God, the Word which was God became flesh, and we all have seen His glory. In John 1:18 John went on to say that no one has seen God, but "the only begotten Son has declared Him." In his first Epistle John said that we have heard, seen, and touched this One who expresses God as our life (1 John 1:1). This is the God in His salvation. The God in Judaism is true but hidden. The God in His salvation is expressed.

In the Old Testament God spoke through the prophets but never had Himself expressed. In the New Testament, that is, in God's salvation, God speaks in the Son who is God's Word, God's speaking, and even God Himself. He speaks God, declares God, and expresses God. In the old time God spoke through the prophets indirectly, but now He speaks in the Son directly.

When Peter was on the mount of transfiguration with the Lord and saw Moses and Elijah he still held the old concept and ranked Moses and Elijah with the Son of God (Matt. 17:1-8). He had to learn that the old way of God's speaking was over. There is no more Moses and no more Elijah—only the Son of God. Peter needed to cross the river and hear the Son. The Son now is God's unique Word, God's unique speaking. He is God's declaration and expression. He not only speaks for God—He speaks God. He is the effulgence of God's glory and the impress of God's substance. He is God expressed. The God in His salvation is much better than the God in the Jewish religion. There God is hidden; here God is expressed.

The Son in whom God speaks is the very One who created the heavens and the earth (1:10). He is nothing less than God the Creator. He is also the One who upholds the whole universe. He upholds all things by the word of His power (1:3). He is also the anointed One, the One who is appointed to inherit the entire created universe (1:2). This appointed Heir is God Himself (1:8). This God is nothing less than the Jewish God, but He is more than the Jewish God. No one has ever seen the Jewish God, but to us, the proper Hebrews, God is revealed, expressed, touched, received, possessed, and experienced day by day.

In the Lord's recovery we have many Jewish brothers who have become Hebrews. Before they came into the Lord's recovery they all knew about God, but they did not enjoy Him. In their religion, they only had God in terminology; they did not have God in their experience. Now they have Him in experience.

In opening his Epistle, the writer of Hebrews indicated that the God of the real Hebrews is much better than the God in the old Jewish religion. He is not only God the Father, but also God the Son. Both of these concepts are found in Isaiah 9:6. "Unto us a son is given...and his name shall be called...The everlasting Father." A Son is given to us, yet His name is called the everlasting Father. The Father is now the Son given to us. The Father is for His being, and the Son is for His being given. In His being the very God, He is the Father, and in being given to us He is the Son. As Isaiah 9:6 clearly reveals, in being given He is the Son, yet He is called the everlasting Father. The Father is for His being, and the Son is for His being given to reach us, to be gained by us in our experience. If He were only the Father, we could never receive Him or enjoy Him. Praise Him that He is the Son given to us. God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son to us (John 3:16). The Son is a divine gift from the Father, and this divine gift is God Himself. God gave Himself to us as a divine gift in the Son.

Our God is the expressed God, the God who reaches us, who is received by us, who is experienced by us, and who becomes our enjoyment day by day. This is our God. Surely this God is better than the God of Judaism. This God is Jesus, the Son of God, God Himself. He is God's expression, God reaching us, God being received, experienced, enjoyed, and possessed by us.

Week 2 – Day 5 (4/20)

Heb. 1: 4-5 Having become as much better than the angels as to have inherited a more distinguished name than they. 5 For to which of the angels has He ever said, “You are My Son; this day have I begotten You”? And again, “I will be a Father to Him, and He will be a Son to Me”? 7 And of the angels He says, “Who makes His angels winds and His ministers a flame of fire”;

Now we need to see that the Son as the expressed God is much higher than the angels. He is superior to the angels. Not only is the God in salvation superior to the angels, but even the God in Judaism was much superior to them, for the angels were His servants. The angels are winds and flames of fire (1:7). Do not think so highly of the angels. Perhaps many of you desire to be an angel. We shall see that the angels are not only inferior to Christ; they are also inferior to us. Even in the Old Testament times, God was far superior to the angels. They simply served His purpose. Thus, it goes without saying that our Christ, the Son of God, is even more superior to the angels than was the God of Judaism. The angels, which are like winds and flames of fire, are simply the creatures, while the Son is the Creator. As creatures, the angels are much inferior to the Son, and as the Creator, the Son is much superior to the angels.

I. THE SON—A MORE EXCELLENT NAME

The Son has a more excellent name than the angels. Verse 1:4 says, “Having become, by so much, better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they.” This more excellent name is the Son, which is fully defined in the following verses of this chapter. “For to which of the angels has He ever said, You are My Son; this day I have begotten You? And again, I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son?” (1:5). Romans 1:4 says that Christ “was designated the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness out of the resurrection of the dead.” His coming out of death was the designation that He is the Son of God. Christ has been designated as and declared to be the Son of God. He has received such an excellent name.

II. IN RESURRECTION

It is in resurrection that Christ is declared to be the Son of God who is superior to the angels. Resurrection means a new beginning; it denotes germination. Verse 3 refers to His death by saying, “having made purification of sins.” Verse 5 indicates His resurrection by which He was begotten to be the Firstborn Son of God (Acts 13:33) as a beginning of a new age, the age of the church which is composed of His many brothers born of God through His resurrection.

III. IN ASCENSION

Hebrews 1 also speaks of Christ’s ascension, which follows His resurrection. Verse 13 says, “But to which of the angels has He said at any time, Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet?” This clearly refers to the ascension. In His ascension Christ, as the ascended Son of God, is much superior to the angels. He is no longer in the tomb or on the earth; He is at “the right hand of the Majesty on high” (1:3). This is His ascension in which He was inaugurated into His office to carry out God’s eternal purpose, that is, to build up the church and to bring His many brothers into glory.

IV. IN THE SECOND COMING

Christ, after being seated on the throne in His ascension, is waiting for His enemies to be subdued as His footstool. Then He will come back. As the Son of God, He is also superior to the angels in His second coming. Verse 6 alludes to this. “And, when He brings again the Firstborn into the inhabited earth, He says, And let all the angels of God worship Him.” How do we know that this verse refers to the second coming? Because it speaks of Christ as the Firstborn. In His first coming, He was God’s only begotten Son (John 1:14). Through the process of resurrection, the only begotten Son became “the firstborn among many brothers” (Rom. 8:29). By this mention of the Firstborn we know that this verse refers to His coming back. In His second coming He will be the Firstborn. When God brought Him to earth the first time, He was the only begotten Son, but when God brings Him to the inhabited earth the second time, He will be the Firstborn. At that time all the angels will worship Him.

V. IN THE KINGDOM

Following the coming back of Christ is His kingdom. He, as the coming Firstborn Son of God, will be superior to the angels in His kingdom. Verse 8 says, “But as to the Son, Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Your kingdom.” Here the Son is addressed, “O God.” This is a strong proof that the Son is God. Surely God is superior to the angels. This verse also indicates that the throne of the Son is the everlasting throne of God. Thus, His kingdom must also be the kingdom of God. These are the wonderful things in which, in the kingdom, Christ is superior to all the angels.

VI. IN ETERNITY

After the kingdom is eternity. Verses 10 through 12 reveal that Christ will be superior to the angels in eternity. Verse 10 says, “You in the beginning, Lord, have founded the earth, and the heavens are the works of Your hands.” This refers to His creation. “They shall perish, but You remain; and they all shall become old as a garment” (v. 11). This means that the old creation will be terminated and that the new heaven and new earth will be ushered in. “But You are the same, and Your years shall not fail” (v. 12). This means that He will be the everlasting One in eternity. As the Creator and the everlasting One He is superior to the angels, His creatures.

What a portion of the Word is Hebrews chapter one! This chapter gives us an account of Christ from eternity past to eternity future. He was the very God in eternity past (v. 8); He was the Creator of the earth and the heavens (vv. 10, 2); He is the Upholder of all things (v. 3); He is the Heir of all things (v. 2); He was incarnated for redemption by crucifixion (v. 3); He was begotten as the Son of God in resurrection for imparting life to the many sons of God (v. 5); He is the Firstborn Son of God who will come again (v. 6); He will be the King on the throne with the scepter in the kingdom (vv. 8-9); and He will remain forever and ever in eternity future (v. 12). This short chapter covers such a wide span of what Christ is from eternity past to eternity future. This is our Christ. How much superior He is to the angels!

Study Questions

1. How does the book of Hebrews begin? Why is this significant?
2. Describe the two stages of God’s speaking.

Week 3 – Day 1 (4/23)

Col. 1: 16 Because in Him all things were created, in the heavens and on the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or lordships or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through Him and unto Him.

Heb. 1: 9 You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of exultant joy above Your partners";

MESSAGE FIVE

HEIRS OF SALVATION

Hebrews is a special book. In the New Testament there is only one other book in the same category as Hebrews—the book of Revelation. I myself strongly believe that Hebrews was written by the apostle Paul because at the end of the letter he mentions Timothy (13:23). Paul wrote at least thirteen Epistles. Among all the Epistles in the New Testament, Hebrews stands out in a very peculiar way. It is not common; it is quite unusual. Among all the other books of the Bible, Revelation also stands out. Both Hebrews and Revelation are revelations of Christ, revealing Christ in special and particular ways. Many aspects of Christ can only be seen in Hebrews, and other particular aspects of Him can only be found in Revelation. These two books are high, deep, and profound in their revelation of Christ. Because of this, they are closed to most Christians. Although many Christians can talk about the stories in the four gospels, justification by faith, and things such as head covering, the Lord's table, and the manifestation of the gifts, they cannot touch the depth of Hebrews and Revelation. Some deal with the book of Revelation in the way of talking about horns, beasts, horses, scorpions, locusts, and frogs. Others discuss it in a higher way, talking about the length of the tribulation or the time of the rapture. But I have never heard people talk about it in the way of Christ being revealed so particularly in God's administration, or in the way of the local churches being the testimony of Jesus. Since my youth, I have heard many messages on Revelation, but I have never heard anyone say that Revelation begins with seven golden lampstands and concludes with a unique lampstand, a golden mountain, holding Christ as the lamp shining with God's light for eternity. We praise the Lord that in His mercy He has opened up these books to us in these last days. He has opened up the depths of His Christ in these books. I do not call your attention to Hebrews and Revelation because these books are deep in doctrine, but because they are profound in the unveiling of Christ. In no other books can we see Christ in such a way. Christ, our dear Lord, is a wonderful person. He is marvelous, far beyond our understanding and utterance. We simply cannot utter His profoundness. Therefore, Hebrews and Revelation use various expressions to describe, portray, and unveil this wonderful person. I ask you to take full note of the particulars revealed in these two books.

It may seem that this message on the heirs of salvation has nothing to do with Christ. Believe me, if you are going to know Christ, you must know this message, for it contains a particular aspect concerning Christ. Christ is wonderful, profound, unlimited, rich, and marvelous. As such a One, He certainly needs all of us to be heirs of salvation. Salvation is nothing less than the wonderful person of Christ Himself. Christ Himself, as the most profound, marvelous, unlimited, and immeasurable One, is our salvation. To say that we are heirs of salvation means that we inherit this profound, marvelous, immeasurable, and unlimited Christ. Christ's profoundness requires our partnership. Our partnership with Christ unveils the profoundness of Christ.

I. THE FIRSTBORN SON BEING THE APPOINTED HEIR

In His economy God not only has a great operation, but He also has tremendous riches. In His operation He has accomplished and is going to accomplish many things. He has also created and brought forth many things. For this, He has appointed the Son to be not only the Operator but also the Heir. He also has given

the Son the authority to do everything in His purpose and the right to inherit all things in His operation. Hebrews 1:2 says that God made the universe through the Son and that He appointed the Son to be the Heir of all things. Colossians 1:16 says that all things were created by and for the Son. John 13:3 tells us that the Father has given all things to the Son. Thus, the Son is the Lord of all (Acts 10:36).

Firstly, the Son was appointed by God the Father (1:2); then He was anointed by the Father with the Spirit (1:9); and eventually, after the Son had been designated to be the Son of God (Rom. 1:4), being begotten of God in His resurrection to be the Firstborn Son of God (1:5; Acts 13:33), He was inaugurated as the Lord of all into His office at the time of His ascension into the heavens (Acts 2:36). He was not only appointed and anointed by God, but, in His exaltation, was inaugurated as both the Lord and Christ to administrate God's operation and was designated as the legal Heir to inherit all things in God's economy. He, as Isaac, the Son of Abraham, is going to inherit the earth (Psa. 2:8), the kingdom (Dan. 7:13-14), the throne (Luke 1:32), and all things (Matt. 11:27). Since He is not only the Son of God, but also the Heir of God, even the legal Heir of God, all that God the Father is and has is for His possession (John 16:15). This is our Savior, the One who is the salvation of which we are heirs.

II. THE MANY SONS BEING SAVED TO BE THE JOINT-HEIRS

In order to realize that we are the heirs of salvation, we must be aware that, in God's economy, God has the Firstborn Son and the many sons. How many sons did God have before Christ was incarnated? He had only one, unique Son. In the Bible, this Son is called the only begotten (John 1:14, 18). John 3:16, a verse familiar to every Christian, says that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. God's only begotten Son was Christ. Before His death and resurrection, Christ was the unique Son of God. The New Testament reveals that through Christ's death and resurrection the many sons of God were born (1 Pet. 1:3). Early in the morning of the day of His resurrection, the Lord Jesus said to Mary, "Go to My brothers and say to them, 'I ascend to My Father and your Father and My God and your God'" (John 20:17). He never called His disciples brothers before that morning. Even in John 15 He said, "No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his lord is doing; but I have called you friends" (v. 15). The most intimate term He used regarding His disciples before His resurrection was "friend." But after His resurrection, He met one of His female disciples and told her to go to His brothers. This was prophesied in Psalm 22. The first words of this psalm, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" were spoken by the Lord when He was on the cross (Matt. 27:46). The first twenty-one verses of this psalm speak of the Lord's crucifixion. Suddenly, verse 22 says, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren." This proves that He passed through death and entered into resurrection. After He passed through death and resurrection, the many brothers were produced. He was that one grain of wheat which through death and resurrection became many grains (John 12:24). Now God has many sons. He not only has the one Son, but the many sons with the Firstborn. Before His resurrection Christ was the only begotten Son of God. After His resurrection, since many sons of God have been produced, He became God's Firstborn Son with many brothers.

What is a son? A son is the expression of his father. Many times when I see a son I can recognize the father's face, for the sons express their fathers. Often when I see a little boy I know whose son he is, for when I look at his face I see his father's face. The father is never the expression of the son; rather the son is the expression of the father. How many sons does God have? Before Christ's resurrection, God had only one Son. This means that He had one, unique expression. How many expressions does God have today? He has many because He has many sons. All His sons are His expression. An understanding of this is basic to knowing the matter of the heirs of salvation.

Week 3 – Day 2 (4/24)

John 1:12-13 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the authority to become children of God, to those who believe into His name, 13 Who were begotten not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

In God's salvation we are not only born of God to be His sons (John 1:12-13), but also made "heirs of God and joint-heirs of Christ" (Rom. 8:17; Gal. 4:7; Titus 3:7). To be born sons of God is one thing; to be made heirs of God is another. Do you know the difference between a son and an heir? You may be a son without being an heir. To be a son requires the birth; to be an heir requires the maturity in growth. Before a boy can become an heir, he must be matured. However, even after being matured he is not yet fully qualified to be an heir. In addition to reaching maturity, an heir must be legalized. You may be mature according to age and yet not be legalized to be the heir. Thus, in order to be an heir you need to be both mature and legalized. In order for a person to become God's heir he needs three things: to be reborn as a child of God, to grow into maturity, and to be legalized.

Suppose a certain king has five sons. Will they all inherit the throne? No. Only the firstborn will inherit the throne of the kingdom. Nevertheless, the firstborn needs to mature and to be designated as the crown prince. Then he will be the legal successor to the throne and will inherit the kingdom. Perhaps when you hear this you might say, "Since Christ is the Firstborn, we have no right to touch the throne of the kingdom." But I am here to tell you that although the throne of the United Kingdom is just for one person, the throne of the heavenly kingdom is for the Firstborn and His many brothers. We all are His brothers and we are also His co-heirs. When He is on the throne, we shall be there with Him (Rev. 3:21). We shall be His co-kings (Rev. 20:4, 6).

Our Father is a great Father, much greater than Abraham. We, the many sons of God the Father, have so much to inherit with Christ, the Firstborn Son of God. But we need to grow and mature in life that we may be made legal heirs.

What is the destiny of a saved person? What is God's purpose in saving the many sons? His purpose is that we be joint-heirs of His Son. The Firstborn Son of God is God's appointed Heir, and we, the many sons, have been saved to be His joint-heirs. The destiny of our salvation is to be the joint-heirs of Christ. We are heirs with Christ! Christ is the appointed Heir and we are His joint-heirs.

What are we going to inherit? Hebrews 2 says that we, the joint-heirs of Christ, will inherit the earth. Of course, we shall inherit something far more than the earth. Inheriting the earth during the millennium is just a prize similar to the prize awarded to a student who receives straight A's in school. We will certainly inherit a great deal more than this. First Corinthians 3:22 tells us that all things are ours.

III. THE JOINT-HEIRS BEING THE PARTNERS OF THE APPOINTED HEIR

The joint-heirs are the partners of the appointed Heir (1:9). Since Christ as the Firstborn Son of God is God's appointed Heir and we as the many sons of God are His joint-heirs, we are His partners. He and we, we and He, are in one partnership sharing the same interests in the divine corporation. Have you ever heard that we are Christ's partners? Hallelujah, we are His partners! Suppose you become the partner of a billionaire. You would certainly be assured of having great riches, for whatever the billionaire has is yours. You are one with him in a great corporation. God has the biggest corporation in the universe. The name of this corporation is "Christ and the Church." We are the partners in this corporation. We have not been hired by this corporation; we are the partners. In the entire universe God has only one corporation—"Christ and the Church"—and this corporation has millions of angels to be the serving ones. The Jews should no longer boast in the angels; the angels are our servants (1:14).

**IV. THE MANY SONS COMPOSING
THE HOUSE OF GOD—BETHEL**

The many sons, who are the joint-heirs of Christ and His partners, compose the house of God, Bethel. The house of God is composed of all His sons. We are the joint-heirs and the partners of Christ. We are also the sons and the house of God. Hebrews 2:10 tells us that we are the sons of God. Then Hebrews 3:6 says that we are the house of God. This house of God is living because it is built with us, the living sons of the living God. It is altogether a matter of God being the Spirit and indwelling our spirit. The living God as the Spirit dwells in our regenerated spirit. Here is the house of God on earth. Hence, it is the habitation of God in our spirit (Eph. 2:22, Gk.).

**V. THE FIRSTBORN SON BEING
THE HEAVENLY LADDER AT BETHEL**

The first mention of God's house in the Bible is in Genesis 28. Remember, the first mention of anything in the Scriptures establishes the principle of that thing. In the mention of the house of God in Genesis 28 many spiritual principles are established: that where the house of God is, there is the heavenly ladder; that the house of God with the heavenly ladder is the gate of heaven; and that where there is the house of God with the heavenly ladder as the gate of heaven, there are the ministering angels ascending and descending upon the ladder. Wherever the house of God is on earth, there is the heavenly ladder. This ladder joins earth to heaven and brings heaven down to earth. The place with the heavenly ladder is the gate of heaven. Here the angels ascend and descend as they do their service, which is to take care of the house of God as the gate of heaven. This is the picture of God's house on earth.

We must remember that in Hebrews we are told that we are joint-heirs of Christ, His partners, and the house of God, today's Bethel on earth. Since we are the house of God, the real Bethel, the heavenly ladder, which is Christ, is here. Since the heavenly ladder is here, the angels ascend and descend upon this ladder as they do their service. The church today is the house of God composed of God's many sons with Christ, the Firstborn Son of God, as the heavenly ladder. Therefore, the church is the gate of heaven with Christ as the heavenly ladder joining earth to heaven and bringing heaven to earth. Upon this ladder the angels are ministering as they ascend and descend.

What was revealed in Genesis 28 was confirmed by the Lord Jesus in John 1:51. "And He said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, you shall see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man." Here the Lord Jesus tells us clearly that He Himself, as the Son of Man who was born in His resurrection to be God's Firstborn Son, is the heavenly ladder and that upon Him the ministering angels are ascending and descending as they render their service to the house of God composed of God's many sons.

**VI. THE HOUSE OF GOD BEING
THE GATE OF HEAVEN**

The church as the house of God, the habitation of the living God on earth, is the gate of heaven. Wherever the house of God is, there is the heavenly ladder, which is Christ. Where is Christ? He is both in the heavens and on the earth in the church. Hence, He becomes the ladder in the church that joins earth to heaven and brings heaven to earth. Here is the place for us to stay. We as God's saved ones, the many sons of God, the joint-heirs and partners of Christ, should live and have our being in the church while we are on earth. It is here that we enjoy the open heaven of God. It is here that we participate in Christ as the heavenly ladder. It is here that we have so many angels ministering all kinds of services to us. Above all, it is here that we express God in His glory.

Week 3 – Day 3 (4/25)

Acts 12: 5, 7 So then Peter was kept in the prison; but prayer was being made fervently by the church to God concerning him. 7 And behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shined in the cell; and he struck Peter's side and roused him, saying, Rise up quickly. And his chains fell off his hands.

VII. THE ANGELS MINISTERING TO THE HEIRS OF SALVATION

At the end of such a glorious chapter, chapter one of Hebrews, concerning the unlimited Son of God, we are told that the angels are our servants. “Are they [angels] not all ministering spirits, sent forth for service for the sake of those who are about to inherit salvation?” Christ is God’s Heir and we are the joint-heirs of Christ. Even more, we are His partners in the divine interest. What a high position is this! It is much higher than that of the angels. The angels in God’s economy are only the ministering spirits rendering service to us, the joint-heirs of Christ and the partners of God’s appointed Heir. In God’s universe we are the owners and the angels are our servants. They serve us, the many sons of God, the heirs of salvation.

Let me share with you some real examples of the ministry of angels. When Peter was put into prison, an angel came, opened the door, and led him out of the prison (Acts 12:5-16). Peter then went and knocked on the door of the house of Mary. When Rhoda, a maidservant, opened the door and told the people in the house that it was Peter, they said that it must have been his angel. We all have at least one angel. Matthew 18:10 proves this. “Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.” We should not wrong our brothers because their angels are in the presence of the Father. The angels of God are ascending and descending on the heavenly ladder ministering to the heirs of salvation. We could also cite the example of Cornelius who was visited by an angel when he was praying (Acts 10:1-4). Furthermore, Psalm 34:7 says, “The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them.” If you love God and seek Him, He will send angels to camp round about you.

Who are we? We are the heirs of salvation. Who are the angels? They are our servants that minister to us continually. How have we become such heirs? Because of Christ. He is the Firstborn Son of God, and we are the many sons of God. He is the appointed Heir, and we have been saved to be His joint-heirs. We are partners in the heavenly corporation of “Christ and the Church,” and have millions of angels ministering to us. May the Lord open our eyes to see this.

Now we may summarize the main points of this message. Christ, the Firstborn Son of God, is God’s appointed Heir of all things. We, the many sons of God, are His “joint-heirs,” inheriting not only salvation but also all things with Him. Hence, we are the partners, joint-owners with Him of the universe, while the angels are merely our servants, not only inferior to Him but also to us. The Son has been appointed to be the Heir, and we have been saved to be His joint-heirs, sharing in His inheritance. The “so great a salvation” referred to in 2:3 is able to save us to such an extent that it brings us into the partnership of His appointment. Thus, we share in whatever He inherits. We, as partners of the Son, are the house of God, the real Bethel, the gate of heaven, where the Son is the heavenly ladder, joining earth to heaven and bringing heaven to earth. Upon this ladder the angels of God are ascending and descending as ministering spirits for service to us who inherit so great a salvation. What is covered in the book of Hebrews is like the gate of heaven. Here we enjoy Christ as the heavenly One who joins us to heaven and brings heaven to us that we may be a heavenly people living a heavenly life on earth and inheriting all the heavenly things. How could the Hebrew believers withdraw from this and return to their old religion and boast in the angels? The angels are simply our ministering servants, whereas we are the glorious heirs of God’s marvelous salvation.

MESSAGE SIX

SO GREAT A SALVATION

The subject of this message is “so great a salvation” (2:3). Many people have preached on this subject about going to heaven. According to their opinion, going to heaven is the “so great a salvation.” This concept is too low. The “so great a salvation” is not that low. Why do people use such a high subject to preach the gospel with such a low concept? Because their experience of salvation is low. Although they have the term “so great a salvation,” they do not realize the depth of this term in Hebrews. In order to get into the depth of “so great a salvation” we need to cross the river from the traditional understanding of God’s salvation to a deeper realization of God’s great salvation.

The basic concept of the book of Hebrews is crossing the river, passing over from one side to the other. It is firstly to pass over from the side of Judaism to the side of “so great a salvation.” The old Jewish religion had become the old country, the other side of the river which we all must leave. Although we are not Jewish believers, in a very real sense we might be in that region called “the other side.” It might be the other side of old Christianity. I am concerned that some of you reading this message are still in the region of old Christianity or are still clinging to the old concepts of Christianity. Perhaps you have come into the church where you have heard something better, but you still think that you have many good things from the past and find yourself unable to forget them. Perhaps even now, at this very moment, you are staggering, asking yourself, “Shall I go forward, or shall I stay here?” You may not be going backwards, but you are considering whether or not to stay where you are. You need the book of Hebrews. You need to be encouraged to cross the river, to cross over from the other side.

We need to cross rivers every day. At the least we must cross a small river. You may need to cross a river after having offended your wife. After you offended her, you found yourself in an old region. You must cross the river. If you are unwilling to pay the price, you will stagger back and forth. You need to cross that small river. Although that river is small, it separates you from the holy of holies, from the enjoyment of “so great a salvation.” Every river you cross becomes a salvation to you, but every river that you do not cross becomes a veil. As long as you are on the other side of the river, you are outside of the veil. You are not in the holy of holies, participating in “so great a salvation.” If you cross the river, you will enter within the veil and share in the great salvation.

In studying the book of Hebrews in the past, I used two slogans. The first, “outside the camp,” is found in 13:13, which says, “Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.” Although the King James Version says, “without the camp,” the Greek is better translated “outside the camp.” We all must go outside the camp. What is the camp? Originally, the camp was Judaism. Today the camp may be Christianity, Catholicism, or anything, religious or worldly, that separates you from the enjoyment of God’s great salvation. Let us go forth therefore outside the camp. Then where shall we go? This brings us to the second slogan, “within the veil,” that is, within the holy of holies, found in 6:19-20. Jesus, our Forerunner, has entered within the veil. He is there now in the holy of holies. He certainly is not in any camp.

Some Christians are fond of camping in their analytical mind. Their mind becomes their camp. In fact, it might even become their Chaldea, their Mesopotamia, where Abraham was before he entered into the good land. As long as you are not in the good land, you need to cross the river. How much you need to cross the river into the good land! What is your Chaldea? Nearly every Christian has some kind of Chaldea. Some Christians cling to their Bible knowledge. They hold on to the matter of Bible study, thinking that they know the Bible. However, their Bible knowledge becomes their Chaldea. Some brothers among us have had to cross over the river from the side of traditional Bible knowledge, some from the side of their religious background, and some from the side of their past experiences. Oh, how we all must realize that Hebrews is a book of river crossing! Never hold on to anything that is not up to the standard of “so great a salvation.”

Week 3 – Day 3 (4/25)(Cont'd)

Years ago I had a good number of co-workers. At first, they were fine because they were not stuck to anything. However, after a few years some of them got stuck to certain things. Although those things were good, they became their Chaldea. If they had been with Joshua when he led the Israelites across the river Jordan, some of them probably would have stopped him, saying, “Don’t do this. When we came out of Egypt and crossed the Red Sea, no one ever told us that we would have to cross the Jordan.” The old knowledge and experience that those co-workers had became their Chaldea, and they would not cross the river. Nevertheless, day by day the Lord is going on. He is not standing still. None of us should stay with what we have experienced in the past. You must go on. Keep going on. A Hebrew is one who goes on.

Now we need to see what is “so great a salvation.” This salvation is not great in the matter of going to heaven or even in the matters of forgiveness and justification by faith. I treasure both forgiveness and justification by faith, but the book of Hebrews, the book that covers “so great a salvation,” speaks of something higher. Forgiveness and justification by faith are salvation, but they are not “so great a salvation.” The “so great a salvation” is not even great in the matter of regeneration. In what, then, is this salvation so great?

I. GREAT IN WHAT CHRIST IS

Firstly, it is great in what Christ is. The writer of Hebrews used the term “so great.” This term is difficult to define. How great is “so great”? Although we cannot adequately describe “so great,” this “so great a salvation” is great in what Christ is. Do you know what Christ is? Although you may know Christ according to the four gospels, do you know Christ according to Hebrews?

A. As the Son of God, as God

Do you know Christ as the Son of God? Probably you know Him as the Son of God in a fragmentary way. You may have the subconscious concept that the Father is one God and that the Son is another. You may not have this kind of terminology, but deep within you may hold this concept. This is the reason that I say that the “so great a salvation” is great in what Christ is as the Son of God, as God. When we say that Christ is the Son of God, we mean that He is God. He is none other than God.

This brings us, once again, to the matter of the Trinity. According to the Bible, we may deal with this matter of the Trinity in two ways—in the way of doctrine or in the way of experience. One day Philip, one of the Lord’s disciples, said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father and it suffices us” (John 14:8). This is a doctrinal question. Doctrinally speaking, the Son is the Son and the Father is the Father. Perhaps Philip thought to himself, “The Son is now speaking to us, yet we have not seen the Father. So I will beg the Son to show us the Father.” The Lord Jesus did not answer Philip in the way of doctrine but in the way of experience. “Jesus said to him, Am I so long a time with you, and you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father. How is it that you say, Show us the Father?” (John 14:9). As long as Philip had seen the Son, he had seen the Father. As far as doctrine is concerned, the Father and the Son are two, but as far as experience goes, when you see the Son, you see the Father. Many Christians talk about the Trinity in a mental and doctrinal way, neglecting their experience. As I pointed out in a previous message, the Bible reveals that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are all in us. Doctrinally speaking, we have the Father in us, the Son in us, and the Spirit in us. Experientially speaking, however, we realize that we have only one in us. Thus, to be doctrinal is one thing and to be experiential is another.

Heb. 1:8-9 But of the Son, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Your kingdom. 9 You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of exultant joy above Your partners";

From my youth, because my family was so closely related to the American missionaries, I heard a great deal about the United States. I had a doctrinal understanding of America. I mentally figured out what San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, Pittsburgh, Detroit, Washington, D.C., and New York City were like. When I came to this country in 1958, I saw these cities experientially. What a difference! They were vastly different from my doctrine. My experience was altogether different from my doctrine. Do not trust in your doctrine. You need experience.

In John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress there is a place called Vanity Fair. Doctrine apart from experience is such a Vanity Fair; it is a vanity bazaar that sells nothing of value. The mental understanding of doctrine without experience is merely a vanity. I was in that kind of vanity bazaar for seven and a half years and obtained hardly anything but doctrines and terms. I gained very little that could be practiced. That vanity bazaar was my Chaldea. One day I crossed the river and entered the good land of the experience of Christ and of the church life.

What is true of the doctrines is also true of the gifts. At a certain time, a number of our co-workers and myself felt that we had to taste and see the so-called Pentecostal things. So I began to speak in tongues. Eventually I learned that that was not a bazaar of vanity but a bazaar of confusion, a market of confusion. If you want to know how confusing that situation is today, you should visit that bazaar. Everything there is confused. Real things and false things, good things and bad things, are all mixed together. No corner of Christendom is as confused as the so-called Pentecostal movement. Thus, the others and I crossed the river once again.

Even those in the church life need to cross the river out of their oldness. What you had fifteen or twenty years ago was good then, but it has become old. At that time you crossed the Red Sea, but now you must cross the Jordan River. Recently I saw a brother who was under my training twenty years ago. When I saw him, I was concerned for him. It seemed that he was still in that old region. Do you not know the principle? Originally, everything established according to the divine oracles in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy was true. However, after a certain length of time it became an old system, Judaism. Those who were in that system had to cross the river. Likewise, what you received twenty years ago was good, but now you must cross the river out of that region. I urge you to cross the river out of your oldness.

Christ is the Son of God. He is also God Himself. If you try to figure out the Trinity according to your mentality, how will you explain verses 1:8 and 9? "But as to the Son, Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of exultant joy above Your partners." Verse 8 says, "But as to the Son, Your throne, O God," and verse 9 says, "God, Your God, has anointed You." The words O God and Your God both refer to the Son. What does this mean? It seems to mean God's God. "O God,...Your God." Since the Son is God Himself, He is God; therefore, verse 8 says, "O God." Since the Son is also man, God is His God; therefore, verse 9 says, "Your God." Christ is not simple; He has many aspects. He is the Son of God, even God Himself. He is also the Son of Man, a real man. For the unveiling of "so great a salvation," Hebrews firstly refers us to Christ as the Son of God, even as God Himself. The Son of God, even God Himself, is one of the elements of "so great a salvation." What God is makes the salvation "so great." This salvation is great in all the fullness of the Godhead.

B. As the Son of Man, as Man

Firstly, before 2:3, where "so great a salvation" is mentioned, Hebrews reveals how Christ is the Son of God, even God Himself. Then after 2:3, in order to show us that the salvation we have in Christ is great, this book continues by showing us how He is also the Son of Man, a real man. The salvation we have in Christ is not merely some matters, such as forgiveness of sins, justification, reconciliation, redemption,

Week 3 – Day 4 (4/26)(Cont'd)

regeneration, etc., but also a wonderful, unlimited Person who is both God in eternity and man in time. It is such a marvelous Person who makes His salvation “so great.”

Christ is the very God and He is also a real man (2:6). Although I was saved for years, I was not clear that my Savior was both God and man. I only knew that He was the Son of God. I was not even clear that He was God, much less that He was also man. Our Lord Jesus is both God and man.

Some Christians, even some Christian workers, have argued that Christ died as a man, but that after He was resurrected and ascended to the heavens He was no longer a man. They claim that the Jesus in the heavens is no longer a man. According to this concept, when Jesus was resurrected, He stripped off His humanity. Because such arguments were directed against me, I purposely wrote the hymn that contains the lines,

Lo! In heaven Jesus sitting,
Christ the Lord is there enthroned;
As the man by God exalted,
With God’s glory he is crowned.

In reply to these arguments, I asked, “If Jesus in the heavens is no longer the Son of Man, how could Stephen have seen Him as the Son of Man?” (Acts 7:56). Furthermore, Matthew 26:64 shows us that He is the Son of Man now sitting in the heavens and coming back in the future. Moreover, Revelation tells us that He is the Son of Man among the local churches (1:13) and that He will return as the Son of Man (14:14). Hence, 1 Timothy 2:5, written after His ascension, still calls Him “the man Christ Jesus.” Our Savior is a man. Although He is resurrected, Jesus is still a man, a resurrected man, an uplifted man, a man who, in ascension, is on the throne in the heavens. Jesus is qualified to be our Savior because He is both God and man. This is why His salvation is “so great”—great not only in the element of God but also in the element of man. All the divine attributes and all the human virtues are the ingredients of “so great a salvation.” In this “so great a salvation” we enjoy the fullness of the Godhead and the uplifted humanity of the man Jesus. In this “so great a salvation” we possess both the divine nature and the human nature of Christ. With what wonderful elements is this “so great a salvation” composed! No human words can utter it adequately. No wonder that the writer says that it is “so great”!

C. The Captain of Salvation

Now we come to the Captain of salvation (2:10). In order to be saved from hell, we do not need a captain, but if we are to enter into glory, into the good land of rest, we need the Captain. God’s salvation is not merely to rescue us from hell and to put us into heaven. His salvation is to save us from all negative things and to bring us into glory, into a glorious rest. As we shall see shortly, this kind of salvation is not an overnight matter; it is a lifelong process. We need to follow our Captain throughout our entire life.

The children of Israel came out of Egypt in one night. It was truly an overnight matter. However, in order for them to enter the good land of rest, they needed to follow their captain. At the beginning they followed Moses and later they followed Joshua. They had a captain for their salvation. After they crossed the Red Sea, they surely were saved, but they were saved to a very small degree. They had gone only a small part of the way and needed to follow their captain all the rest of the way. They had such a captain of salvation.

A captain not only denotes a leader but also a fighter. A captain is a leader who not only cuts the way and paves the way but who also fights the way. If you read your Bible carefully, you will see that from the time when the children of Israel left Egypt until the time when they entered the good land, they were fighting all the way. This is the reason that they were called the hosts (armies) of the Lord (Exo. 12:41). They fought their way into the good land. They needed a captain to lead them on by fighting on. Their going on was a matter of fighting on. Thus, they were formed and trained as a holy army. Wherever they went, they fought. Since there was no thoroughfare, they had to fight their way through.

Heb. 2: 14-15 Since therefore the children have shared in blood and flesh, He also Himself in like manner partook of the same, that through death He might destroy him who has the might of death, that is, the devil, 15 And might release those who because of the fear of death through all their life were held in slavery.

Likewise, since the day we were saved, forgiven, justified, and reborn, a fight has been going on. In a sense, we in the Lord's recovery are an army that is fighting its way through. There is no way for us to take but the way of fighting. We all must fight the battle under the Captain. Jesus our Savior is a fighting Captain. He is fighting and we must follow Him, fighting every inch of the way. Christ is the Captain of salvation. If we did not have such a Captain included in our salvation, our salvation would not be so great. The "so great a salvation" not only includes Christ as the Son of God, as God, and as the Son of Man, as man, but also as the Captain of salvation who takes the lead and fights on that we might follow Him into glory. The Captain of salvation is a factor that makes our salvation "so great."

D. The High Priest

While Christ is fighting as our Captain, He is also ministering as our High Priest. Do not be troubled. On the one hand, He is the fighting Captain; on the other hand, He is a ministering High Priest. He ministers whatever you need. Therefore, there is no reason to lack anything. Christ will minister to you.

After Abraham had fought against the enemy and released Lot, Melchisedec, the High Priest, came to him ministering the bread and wine (Gen. 14:14-20). As we continue on in Hebrews, we shall see that our Jesus is Melchisedec. In order to enjoy the ministry of Melchisedec, you must fight. Only when you fight will He come to you and minister to you. If you do not fight, do not expect Christ to come to you as Melchisedec ministering the bread and wine. However, if you are willing to fight, I can assure you that after every bit of fighting Christ will come to you as the ministering Melchisedec and you will enjoy His supply of bread and wine. This is wonderful. It is another factor that makes our salvation so great.

The "so great a salvation" not only has a Redeemer and a Savior but also a Captain fighting for us and a High Priest ministering to us. Be encouraged. If you do not fight, you will be defeated and have no bread and wine to feed on. However, if you fight, you will not only gain the victory but will also receive the bread and wine. Hallelujah for so great a salvation! It is great in what Christ is.

II. GREAT IN WHAT CHRIST HAS DONE, IS DOING, AND WILL DO

A. Having Made Purification of Sins

What has Christ done? He has made purification of sins (1:3). Be at peace. Your sin has been purified. Although you must hate your sins, you need not be bothered by them. Christ has purified our sins once for all (7:27).

B. Having Tasted Death for Us

Christ has tasted death for us (2:9). Since He has tasted death, death has been abolished (2 Tim. 1:10). Death has been terminated. Do not believe in death. Deny it. Do you have death in your church? Deny it. Do you have an illness in your physical body indicating the presence of death? Do not believe it, and do not accept it. It is a lie.

C. Having Destroyed Satan by Partaking of Our Nature to Release Us from Slavery

Christ has destroyed Satan. He partook of our nature in order to destroy the devil who has the might of death (2:14-15). He has done this on the cross. Satan is finished. Whenever Satan comes, you should say, "Satan, you have come to the wrong place. Don't you know that you have been destroyed? Who released you? Go back to your place." The best way to defeat Satan is to shame him. Say, "Satan, don't you know

Week 3 – Day 5 (4/27)(Cont'd)

that you have been defeated? You have been destroyed. Go back, and keep your position.” Satan will go.

By partaking of our nature and destroying Satan, Christ has released us from slavery. Death has been abolished, Satan, who holds the power of death, has been destroyed, and we have been released from slavery.

D. Sanctifying Us

Christ is now sanctifying us (2:11). He is the Sanctifier and we are the sanctified. He is sanctifying us day by day (1 Thes. 5:23-24). We shall be under His sanctifying work continually until we are fully transformed to His image (2 Cor. 3:18).

E. Being Able to Help Us

Christ is able to help us (2:18). He is able to help us to the uttermost. Do not listen to the lies. Do not listen to your environment, weakness, situation, or your husband or wife. Your wife or husband may be a little liar. Your sickness, weakness, and environment may also be lies. Do not believe the lie. The leading brothers should never listen to lies. Often the brothers and sisters are used by the enemy to lie to the leading brothers. For example, someone may say, “The church meeting is getting very low.” When

someone says this, there is no need to argue with him. Just close your eyes and say, “This is a lie. Get away. I believe that the church is living and set on high.” This is faith. Try it and see. Sisters, if you say that your husband is no good, I can assure you that he will be no good simply because you have prophesied in such a way. You must cross the river. Do not believe that your husband is no good, but rather say, “My husband is the best one among all men.” If you say this, the Lord will come in to honor your prophecy and make your husband the best one. He is able to help us in all things. He is able to succor us in any kind of situation.

What Christ has done in the past, is doing in the present, and will do in the future are all included in the “so great a salvation” and all are factors that make His salvation “so great.”

III. GREAT IN ITS EXTENT

A. To Make Us

Partners of God’s Appointed Heir

This “so great a salvation” is so great in its extent that it even makes us partners of God’s appointed Heir (1:2, 9). Since we have covered this adequately in message five, we do not need to repeat it here.

B. To Bring Us into Glory

This great salvation will bring us into glory (2:10). As we have pointed out on other occasions, glory is God manifested. We, the sons of God, will be brought into that manifestation of glory (Rom. 8:19-21). That will be the climax of the salvation which we share in Christ. So it certainly is a main factor that makes our salvation “so great.”

C. To Make Us to Possess the Coming Inhabited Earth with Christ

This great salvation will make us to possess the coming inhabited earth with Christ (2:5). We do not need to run in an election to be mayor, senator, governor, or president. We shall inherit the coming inhabited earth. This is not a dream. The Bible tells us so. You can declare, “I am going to inherit the earth. This I know, for the Bible tells me so.”

D. To Save Us to the Uttermost

In this great salvation we shall be saved to the uttermost (7:25). This salvation is unlimited, saving us completely, entirely, perfectly for all time and to the end. This is the extent of our “so great a salvation.”

“So great a salvation” is great in what Christ is, in what Christ does, and in its extent. Its most precious part is enjoying Christ as our saving life and rest in this age, and its most glorious part is inheriting Christ’s kingdom with glory in the coming age.

IV. WARNING

A. Give Heed to It More Abundantly

Verse 2:1 says that “we ought to give heed more abundantly to the things which were heard.” You have heard much in these messages and you must give heed to what you have heard. You cannot be discharged of your responsibility and say that you have not heard or seen.

B. Do Not Drift Away from It

Why must we give heed more abundantly to that which we have heard? Because “lest at any time we drift away.” Give heed that you do not drift away from what you have heard. Do not be a piece of driftwood that has no goal or direction and that merely drifts with the current. In order for there to be a drifting away, there must be a current. There was a current in Judaism for the Hebrew believers. There is now a current in the world and even in Christianity. There are many negative currents today. Be careful or else you will drift away from “so great a salvation.” Do not drift away—cross the river.

C. Do Not Neglect It

Furthermore, we should not neglect “so great a salvation” (2:3). If we neglect it, we will receive a just recompense regarding it (2:2). We will suffer a loss (1 Cor. 3:15). This does not mean, however, that we will be lost. Nevertheless, we may receive a just recompense due to our negligence. That would be a great loss. I hope that none of us will fall into this category. Let us all cross the river and go on with our Captain of salvation into glory.

Study Questions

1. What is meant by the terms “the effulgence of His glory” and “impress of His substance”?
2. Describe Christ’s work in creation and redemption.

Week 4 – Day 1 (4/30)

John 5:17-18 But Jesus answered them, My Father is working until now, and I also am working.

18 Because of this therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath but also called God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.

MESSAGE SEVEN

JESUS AS THE SON OF MAN— AS MAN SUPERIOR TO THE ANGELS

In message four we saw that Christ as the Son of God, as God, is superior to the angels. This is revealed in Hebrews 1. Now we come to the second part of this comparison—that Jesus as the Son of Man, as man, is superior to the angels. This is unveiled in Hebrews 2. Firstly we saw Christ as the Son of God, as God; now we must see Jesus as the Son of Man, as man. As both God and man, He is superior to the angels.

Our wonderful Jesus has two natures, the divine and the human. He has divinity and humanity. He is God and He is man. Since He is God, He is the Son of God. Since He is man, He is the Son of Man. According to biblical usage, “man” and “Son of Man” are interchangeable terms. This is proved by Psalm 8:4 which says, “What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?” Hence, the Son of Man simply means man. In the same principle, the Son of God means God. According to John 5:17-18, for Jesus to be the Son of God means that He is God. When the Pharisees heard that the Lord Jesus called Himself the Son of God, they accused Him of blasphemy because, in their understanding, He made Himself equal with God. Thus, to say that Jesus is the Son of God means that He is God. Christ is both God and man. Hebrews chapter one covers His divinity and chapter two covers His humanity. With respect to both His divinity and humanity, He is superior to the angels. Even as the Son of Man, He is superior to the angels.

Although it is easy to realize that God is absolutely superior to the angels, it is difficult for us to realize that man is also superior to them. Do you still hold the concept that you are inferior to angels? I am afraid that if an angel appeared to you, you would worship him. At the least, you would look up to him, subconsciously thinking that he is superior to you. This thought is wrong. If you think that angels are superior to you, you are short of vision. You need to see Hebrews chapter two. Even at the end of chapter one (v. 14), we saw that, as the heirs of salvation, we are much superior to the angels, for the angels are our servants and we are their masters. We are the partners of Christ, and the angels are the servants, ministering to the heirs of salvation. We are the house of God, in which is the heavenly ladder joining us to God and bringing God to us, while the angels are ministering spirits ascending and descending upon this ladder as they render their service to us. Hence, they are much inferior to us. As we pointed out in message four, Matthew 18:10 reveals that everyone of us has an angel. Psalm 34:7 says, “The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.” An angel appeared to Cornelius (Acts 10:3), telling him where to contact the one who preached the gospel. Moreover, Acts 12:7-11 tells us how an angel opened the door that Peter might escape from prison. Although you may not know the name of your ministering angel, I am quite sure that he knows your name. We all have at least one angel that ministers to us continually. This is not superstition; this is reality. According to my experience, I can testify that as I have been traveling during the past forty years I have realized that my angel was with me and that, on many occasions, he protected me.

Christ, the Son of Man, as man, is superior to the angels. Hebrews 2 does not speak of Him as a great man but as a little man. However, even as a little man He is superior to the angels. Before we consider the superiority of Jesus as a man to the angels, we need to see a basic factor in His being a man, that is, that God has ordained man to rule over the earth as revealed in Genesis 1:26-28.

I. THE COMING INHABITED EARTH

Hebrews 2:5 says, “For He did not subject to angels the coming inhabited earth, concerning which we speak.” The word for connects verse 5 with the preceding verses in the same chapter. Verses 1 through 4

give us a warning, telling us that there will be a “just recompense” for neglecting “so great a salvation.” The Lord’s wonderful Person plus His splendid work are “so great a salvation,” a salvation which none of us should neglect. The word escape in verse 3 means, in principle, to escape the recompense alluded to in verse 2. If we neglect “so great a salvation,” it is right and just that we receive a certain recompense. What will be this “just recompense”? Although we shall say more about this in coming messages, if we pay attention to the little word for in verse 5, we can understand something about it now. The word for refers back to the negligence mentioned in verse 3. If we neglect “so great a salvation,” we shall receive a certain kind of “just recompense,” “for He did not subject to angels the coming inhabited earth, concerning which we speak.” Thus, the “just recompense” is related to the “coming inhabited earth.”

If we neglect so great a salvation, “how shall we escape?” This does not mean that we shall lose our salvation and be lost. Once we have been saved, we are saved forever. John 10:28 assures us of this: “And I give to them eternal life, and they shall by no means perish forever, and no one shall snatch them out of My hand” (Recovery Version). When we believe in the Lord Jesus, He gives us eternal life and we shall never perish. The Lord’s word will remain forever, and His word tells us that we have been eternally saved. We do have eternal security. However, this does not mean that a saved person can have no problems. According to this portion of Hebrews, a saved person, whose salvation is eternally secure, might miss the “coming inhabited earth.” Now we need to find out what is the “coming inhabited earth.”

A. In the Coming Age of the Kingdom

If you know the Bible as a whole, you will realize that the “coming inhabited earth” will be this earth in the coming age with God’s kingdom. Psalm 2:8 says that God has given to Christ the nations to be His inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession. Revelation 11:15 says, “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.” The day is coming—perhaps it will be soon—when the nations, the kingdoms, of the earth will become the kingdom of Christ. According to Daniel 2:35, at the time of the coming back of the Lord Jesus there will be on the earth nations represented by an image of iron, clay, brass, silver, and gold. All of these elements represent the earthly kingdoms. Suddenly a stone “cut out without hands” (Dan. 2:34) will descend out of heaven and will break in pieces the iron, clay, brass, silver, and gold. Daniel 2:35 reveals that “the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.” This stone which becomes a mountain is the kingdom of God.

The stone “cut out without hands” that breaks in pieces the earthly kingdoms is Christ. Christ is not only the foundation stone (Isa. 28:16), cornerstone (Matt. 21:42; Acts 4:11), topstone (Zech. 4:7), and living stone (1 Pet. 2:4) for God’s building; He is also the stumbling stone (Matt. 21:44; 1 Pet. 2:8) to the unbelieving Jews and the smiting stone to the nations (Matt. 21:44). Firstly, for the believers, He is a stone for God’s building. As the stone for God’s building, He is the foundation stone, cornerstone, topstone, and living stone to produce us as stones for God’s building (1 Pet. 2:5). Secondly, in relation to the unbelieving Jews, He is a stumbling stone. The unbelieving Jews have stumbled over Him. Do not think that the Lord Jesus is always kind to everyone. To the unbelieving Jews, at least, He will be the stumbling stone. Thirdly, to the Gentiles, the nations, the Lord will be the smiting stone that descends out of heaven to smite all the kingdoms of the earth into pieces (Dan. 2:34-35, 44). This smiting stone will become a great mountain, meaning that the Lord Jesus will become the kingdom filling the whole earth. This kingdom, the great mountain that fills the whole earth, is Christ Himself. At that time, the earth will be the Lord’s kingdom. This is what Hebrews 2:5 refers to as the “coming inhabited earth.” The “coming inhabited earth” denotes the earth having become the Lord’s kingdom in the next age. This may happen soon.

This “coming inhabited earth” in the coming age is not subjected to angels. In other words, God never ordained the angels to rule over that earth. He has ordained man to rule over the earth in the coming age. Based upon this fact, the writer of Hebrews shows us that man is superior to the angels. In this aspect, that of ruling over the earth in the coming age, man is superior to the angels.

Week 4 – Day 2 (5/1)

Gen. 1:26, 28 And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth. 28 And 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 heaven and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.

In His economy, God intended from the very beginning that man should rule over the earth. From eternity past, God determined to have man ruling over the earth. According to the Bible, at the time of creation, God determined that man should exercise His authority over the earth. This is clearly mentioned in Genesis 1:26-28.

There are three chapters in the Bible that belong together—Genesis 1, Psalm 8, and Hebrews 2. All of these chapters share one main point—that God has ordained man to rule over His created earth. Why has God ordained man to rule over the earth? Because God needs a realm, a sphere, a dominion, in which He can exercise His authority. Without such a dominion in which He can exercise His authority, it would be difficult for God to express His glory. The expression of His glory needs a dominion. Suppose God had no authority on earth. How could He come to express His glory? Do you remember the conclusion of the Lord’s prayer? It is, “For thine is the kingdom, and the authority, and the glory” (Gk.). Once there is the kingdom, there is the authority. Then God is able to express His glory. The kingdom is for the authority, and the authority is for the glory. If God has no kingdom, then there can be no exercise of His authority and no expression of His glory. The Lord’s prayer was for the kingdom. In that kingdom there would be the exercise of authority and the expression of glory.

God’s purpose is constant and eternal. God’s purpose is from eternity to eternity. God has never changed His purpose of having man exercise His authority on earth that He might have a dominion as a sphere in which He can express His glory.

The church life today is a dominion. Every local church is a dominion where God’s glory is expressed. This is why today’s church life is the kingdom (Rom. 14:17) on a small scale. Although it is not the kingdom in full scale, it is at least the kingdom in small scale, signifying the same things in the same principle. The proper church life is God’s kingdom where He exercises His authority that He might express His glory. This was His purpose in creating man.

B. For Christ to Take Possession of the Earth

The “coming inhabited earth” in the coming age of the kingdom will be for Christ’s possession. Christ will take possession of the “coming inhabited earth” (Psa. 2:8) for His kingdom. God’s purpose is to recover the earth from the usurping hand of Satan and to establish His kingdom on the earth for the expression of His glory. God has given such an earth to Christ as His inheritance. When we, the saved ones, as His partners shall share in His inheritance of the “coming inhabited earth,” we shall have a share in such a glorious earth with God’s kingdom established on it for the expression of God’s glory. To miss the sharing of this earth will be a “just recompense” to those who neglect “so great a salvation.” If we neglect “so great a salvation” today, we shall not escape this “just recompense” of missing the sharing of the coming kingdom on earth.

II. THE MAN JESUS

God’s purpose for man is in three stages: the stage of creation, the stage of prophecy, and the stage of fulfillment. The man in God’s purpose is both Adam and Christ. Adam was the first man, and Christ was and still is the second man (1 Cor. 15:45, 47). With respect to both men there are these three stages. Let us firstly consider the man in creation.

A. The Man in Creation

1. To Express God with His Image

In creation, God ordained man to express Him with His image (Gen. 1:26-28). Man was made in God's image that he might be able to express Him.

2. To Represent God with His Dominion

God also intended that man represent Him with His dominion. After creating man, God committed His authority to man, thereby authorizing him to be His representative. Thus, at the time of creation, man was ordained to do two things: to express God and to represent Him.

3. Having Failed God in His Purpose

The man in creation, however, failed God. Man became poisoned by Satan and fell. Thus, the man in creation was damaged and failed God in His purpose.

If we only had the book of Genesis, we would be very disappointed. Regardless of the many excellent records in the book of Genesis, at the end of that book we are told that Joseph died and was put into a coffin in Egypt (Gen. 50:26). How pitiful it is that the book of Genesis closes in this way! Joseph, the one who represented God, died, was put into a coffin, and was left in Egypt.

Before we go on, I would like to say a word about Jacob and Joseph. Jacob, who became Israel, the prince of God, and Joseph were actually one complete man. Joseph was a part of Israel, although he was not a part of Jacob. Jacob was a supplanter, a stealer, but he was transformed into Israel, the prince of God (Gen. 32:28; 35:10). When he was experienced and matured, he certainly expressed God with His image. When Jacob was young, he was a supplanter and deceived everyone: his brother, his father, his uncle, and his brothers-in-law. But God is marvelous. He is able to transform such a supplanter and deceiver into a prince of God. When Jacob became an old man, he did not know how to deceive, fight, or supplant. He only knew to stretch forth his hands and bless people. Jacob blessed whomever came to him. Even Pharaoh, the greatest king on earth at the time, was blessed by Israel when Joseph brought his father to see him (Gen. 47:7). Israel was greater than Pharaoh. By that time Israel was mature and expressed God as the very God who blesses. Our God is a blessing God. Thus, Israel, who was fully in God's image, bestowed blessings wherever he went. When he was brought in before Pharaoh, he stretched forth his hands and blessed him. That was truly the expression of God.

The name Israel contains the name of God, for the last two letters of Israel, el, mean God. Nevertheless, Israel needed Joseph as one of his parts, as the reigning part, the representing part. At that time, the entire earth was not actually under Pharaoh's rule; it was under Joseph's rule. Israel with Joseph expressed God with His image on the one hand and represented God with His authority on the other. Nevertheless, the book of Genesis ends by saying that Joseph died, was put into a coffin, and was left in Egypt. The conclusion of the book of Genesis is so poor.

B. The Man in Prophecy

Although the situation at the end of the book of Genesis was very pitiful, it is most promising by the time we come to Psalm 8. The psalmist surely was inspired when he said, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" (vv. 3-4). Under the inspiration of God, the psalmist prophesied the recovery of what had been lost in Adam. He repeated the words of Genesis 1, prophesying that man's lost ordination was to be recovered. Hence, Psalm 8 is a recovery of man's lost ordination which was given in Genesis 1. The divine ordination bestowed upon the created man in Genesis 1 was lost at the time of man's fall. The psalmist prophesied that this ordination would be recovered. As we shall see shortly, the man prophesied in Psalm 8 is the Lord Jesus. This is revealed in Hebrews 2.

Week 4 – Day 3 (5/2)

Heb. 2: 7 You have made Him a little inferior to the angels; You have crowned Him with glory and honor and have set Him over the works of Your hands;

9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little inferior to the angels because of the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death on behalf of everything.

1. A Little Inferior to the Angels

In the prophecy regarding the recovery of man's lost ordination in Psalm 8 it says that God has made man "a little lower than the angels." In Hebrews 2:7, it is quoted as "a little inferior to the angels." This is according to the physical, not the positional, situation. Physically speaking, man is lower than or inferior to the angels.

2. Having Been Crowned with Glory and Honor

However, the prophecy in Psalm 8 says that God "has crowned" man, who is lower than the angels, "with glory and honor." This was not fulfilled in any man until the man Jesus ascended to the heavens. Hence, this prophecy is concerning the Lord as a man and it is fulfilled in Him.

3. Being Set over the Works of God

The prophecy in Psalm 8 also says that God has made man to have dominion over the works of His hands and that He has put all things under his feet. In the quotation in Hebrews 2 it says that God has set man over the works of His hands and has subjected all things under His feet. Clearly this is a repetition of what is mentioned in Genesis 1:26-28. It may be called the recovery of what was given to man in Genesis 1 and was lost due to the fall of man in Genesis 3.

C. The Man in Fulfillment

Hebrews 2:6-9 is the fulfillment of the prophecy in Psalm 8. It tells us that the man in this fulfillment is Jesus. Jesus is the second man (1 Cor. 15:47). Although the first man failed God in His purpose, the second man succeeded. In Genesis 1 is the man in God's creation with God's eternal purpose. That man failed God. Then Psalm 8, speaking about the recovery of man's lost ordination, prophesied of another man. Without this second man, we and the ordination given to man are lost. But we have the second man who has recovered man's lost ordination and has fulfilled God's original purpose. This second man is presented to us in Hebrews 2.

1. Made a Little Inferior to the Angels Because of the Suffering of Death

The man Jesus, in the fulfillment of the prophecy in Psalm 8, was made a little inferior to the angels because of the suffering of death (2:9). According to our physical make-up, we are inferior to the angels. The make-up of the angels is somewhat superior to ours. When Jesus came as a man, His physical make-up was also inferior to that of the angels. He became a man, taking on man's flesh, blood, and nature. Why did He take on a physical make-up that was inferior to that of the angels? For the purpose of suffering death for us. In order to suffer death, He needed a physical body. Without such a physical body there would have been no way for Him to die for our sins. This was the reason that He was made a little inferior to the angels.

2. Crowned with Glory and Honor

After He accomplished redemption by suffering death, Jesus was glorified in His resurrection (Luke 24:26) and in His ascension to the heavens was crowned with glory and honor (2:9). Although the Lord Jesus is both the Son of God and Son of Man, when we come to the matter of His being crowned with glory and honor, we must pay special attention to His humanity, to His being the Son of Man. In Hebrews 1, He is God; in Hebrews 2, He is man. When we are reading Hebrews 1, we must pay our full attention to

the Lord's divinity. However, when we come to Hebrews 2, we must pay our full attention to His humanity. It is in His humanity that He is crowned with glory and honor. As a man in His ascension to the heavens, He was crowned in this way.

Where is Jesus crowned with glory and honor? In the third heavens. The little Jesus who was born in the manger, who was raised in a poor home in Nazareth, and who had no beauty or comeliness, in His ascension to the heavens has been crowned with glory and honor. What is glory and honor? Glory is the splendor related to Jesus' Person; honor is the preciousness related to Jesus' worth, value (1 Pet. 2:7 precious in Greek is the same word as honor here), and dignity which is related to His position (2 Pet. 1:17; Rom. 13:7).

a. Being Made Both Lord and Christ

Jesus was crowned with glory and honor to be the Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36; 10:36b). Before His incarnation, He was the Lord. However, as a man, He was not the Lord. Now, in His ascension, He, as a man, has been crowned to be the Lord. This is a great matter. On the one hand, He already was the Lord because He was God; on the other hand, in His humanity, He was crowned to be the Lord of all. He is also the Christ, that is, the anointed One. The Lord means that He is the Lord ruling over all, and Christ means that He is the anointed One who has been appointed to accomplish everything for God's plan. The anointed One is the appointed One, and the appointed One is the One who runs God's universal corporation, Christ and the church.

b. Being Exalted to Be a Leader and a Savior

Christ has been exalted to be a Leader and a Savior (Acts 5:31). The Greek word for Leader, translated "Prince" in the King James Version, is the same Greek word that is rendered as "Captain" in Hebrews 2:10. The Greek word may also be rendered as "author, originator, inaugurator, or pioneer." There is no one equivalent of this word in English. Christ has been crowned with glory and honor so that He might be our Captain. As the Greek word indicates, He is also our Leader, Prince, Pioneer, and Forerunner. Jesus is the One who fights, takes the lead, moves ahead, being the first to reach His destination. He has cut the way into glory and we are now taking the way He has cut. Hence, He is not only the Savior who saved us from our fallen estate and from all the negative things, but He is also the Captain who, as the Pioneer, has entered into glory that we might be brought into the same estate. The Lord Jesus today is the Lord, the Christ, the Captain, and the Savior.

Chapter one of Hebrews reveals that Christ is the Son of God coming to speak, declare, and express God. As such a One He is superior to the angels. Here, in chapter two of Hebrews, He is the Son of Man going to be the Lord, the Christ, the Captain, and the Savior. His being our Lord, Christ, Captain, and Savior is not mainly based upon His divinity but upon His humanity. This is a very practical matter. Why is Jesus our Lord? Because He is a man. Why is He the Christ, Captain, and Savior? All because He is a man. Angels, who do not have humanity, can never be our Lord, Christ, Captain, and Savior. Only Christ in His humanity can be such a One to us. Furthermore, this humanity is not a natural humanity; it is a resurrected, uplifted, and ascended humanity, a humanity that is crowned with God's glory and honor. Because these concepts are not natural, but are new and fresh to us, we need to spend considerable time on them in order that we might see more.

Week 4 – Day 4 (5/3)

Heb. 2: 14 Since therefore the children have shared in blood and flesh, He also Himself in like manner partook of the same, that through death He might destroy him who has the might of death, that is, the devil,

MESSAGE EIGHT

JESUS IN INCARNATION, CRUCIFIXION, RESURRECTION, GLORIFICATION, AND EXALTATION

In this message we come to the matter of Jesus in incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, glorification, and exaltation. These are very significant terms and probably we are all familiar with them. My burden in this message is to show you how Hebrews chapter two puts all of these five items together. No other chapter or other portion of the Holy Word does this. In some chapters we see Christ's crucifixion. In other chapters we see His resurrection, glorification, and exaltation. But in no portion as short as Hebrews 2 do we see incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, glorification, and exaltation put together. These five major points concerning what Christ has passed through and attained are presented in this chapter in a very particular way, not in the way as they are presented in the Gospels, the Acts, or in the other Epistles. Throughout so many years, the Lord has been showing me all of the items in this one chapter. We have already seen in message four how Hebrews 1 reveals Christ in so many stages: in eternity past, in creation, in incarnation for redemption by crucifixion, in resurrection for imparting life, in exaltation, in His second coming, in the kingdom, and in eternity future. No other chapter affords us such a revelation of Christ as the Son of God from eternity past to eternity future. The sequence in this chapter is more than wonderful. Chapter two of Hebrews is the same in principle. No other chapter gives us all of these five major aspects of Christ. But in Hebrews 2 these items are particularly and even peculiarly revealed. We all must be impressed with these major points of our Christ.

I. IN INCARNATION

A. Sharing in the Children's Blood and Flesh

From my youth, I heard from the pastors that Christ was incarnated simply because God loved us and sent His Son to this evil earth to die for our sins on the cross that we might be saved from hell. That was all I saw concerning the incarnation of Christ. Although this is correct, it is rather shallow. Some of the learned, high-class people will not accept this kind of preaching. They will say that it is low and that it has no purpose or goal. Only low-class people will accept such a low preaching of the gospel. Although the gospel is not low, it has been preached on a low level. I have never heard a preacher who said that Christ became a man in order to partake of our blood and flesh. This thought is much higher. The purpose of Christ's incarnation was that He might share in the children's blood and flesh (2:14). Using human words, we may say that this is very philosophical. This type of high preaching will convince the people who have philosophical minds. They will think that such preaching is very thoughtful.

In the 1920's, in answer to the prayers of so many dear missionaries, the Lord did a marvelous work in the colleges and universities throughout China. Many thoughtful young college students were saved. I also was saved during that time. After we were saved, we began to preach Christ in a higher way. We, the Chinese young people of that time, knew the Chinese philosophical thought. As a result, we knew how to convince people. We preached the higher gospel not according to our human thought but according to the "divine philosophy." God is more than philosophical. What does it mean to say "philosophical"? It simply means thoughtful. God is not simple, superficial, or low. He is deep, thoughtful, purposeful, and meaningful. Our God is a God of purpose. Who could be more philosophical than He? As a result of that higher preaching of the gospel, many doctors, nurses, professors, and learned people were brought to the Lord.

The book of Hebrews is not shallow. It is both deep and high. It is in the highest bracket. This book does not say that because we were fallen and sinful Christ came to save us. It says that all the children are

partakers of blood and flesh and that Christ came to share in our nature. This thought is deeper and higher. One day, the Son of God, our Savior and our God, became exactly the same in nature as we are. He became a human being, sharing in our blood and flesh. This is wonderful. We do not have a Savior who is different in nature from us. No, our God and Savior became exactly the same as we are. I can testify to you that a good number of scholars in China were convinced just by this one thought. They began to think about it, finding it most thoughtful. They saw that God came in the flesh not to command us to do something, but to be one with us. He did not come as God to rescue us, for that would have terrified us. He did not come as an angel to embrace us, for we could not have accepted that. He came, in reality, just as we are. He partook of our nature, of our blood and flesh. This thought will certainly convince the learned people. They will admire it, saying, “This truly is a high thought. The very God became the same in nature as we are, partaking of blood and flesh.” This is the incarnation, and this is the deepest thought and the highest “philosophy.”

The incarnation should not be associated with Christmas. You need to burn everything related to Christmas. If you would go to China and preach the gospel to the learned people and mention Christmas, they would not listen to you. They would say that things such as Christmas trees, stockings full of candies, and Santa Claus are too low, shallow, and childish. That is not the gospel from the Word of God. That is the paganism, the leaven mentioned by the Lord Jesus in Matthew 13:33, brought into Catholicism by the “woman” as the Lord prophesied. How could the learned people be convinced with this kind of preaching? You may convince the poor children in the street, but you will not convince the thoughtful people.

Christianity has preached the Lord’s highest salvation in a low way. We need those who have experienced the high salvation to go to the thoughtful people. Immediately they will be convinced. They also are seeking after truth, for they too were made by God. In their nature there is a seeking after God. But Christianity has superficially and inaccurately presented the gospel to them. The incarnation is not a matter of Christmas. Incarnation means that the very God, the Almighty God, has become flesh. As John 1:14 says, “The Word became flesh.” Who is the Word? The God who created everything. This Word, God the Creator, has become flesh. This is thoughtful and meaningful. Why did He become flesh? Simply that He might be the same as we are. We are men of blood and flesh, and Christ partook of the same. Through incarnation He came as a man to our level. Although Christ is God, He came to our level and shared in our nature. This is the kind of gospel preaching that university students need to hear. They will listen to this. You can hold them night after night with this kind of gospel. The learned people and students do not want to hear the low preaching of the gospel. They regard that as low and selfish. It lacks purpose. We must tell them of God’s purpose—that God came as man in order to establish His corporation of Christ and the church.

I am not speaking about a gospel preaching that I myself have not experienced. In China we did preach the gospel in this way. When we preached about God’s purpose regarding Christ and the church, some of the professors and students said, “We must get into this. For years we have been seeking the answers to the questions of what is the meaning of man, what is the real meaning of human life, and what the universe was created for.” So we gave them a message telling them of God’s purpose. This is the higher preaching of the highest gospel.

B. Being Made Like His Brothers in All Things

It is also a matter of sympathy that Christ shared in our nature, partaking of blood and flesh. He is the Firstborn Son of God and we are His many brothers. Yet, we all are weak and fragile in the flesh. So He became a man in the flesh, the same as we are. Because we are weak and fragile, we need Him to sympathize with us. If you want to sympathize with another person, you need to be the same as he is. If I am not on the same level and in the same situation as you are, I could never sympathize with you. However, if I become the same as you are, I shall be able to sympathize with you. The Lord’s sympathizing with us is also an aspect of His incarnation. Hebrews 2:17 indicates this. The Lord was made like His brothers in all things in order that He might sympathize with them.

Week 4 – Day 5 (5/4)

Heb. 2: 17 Hence He should have been made like His brothers in all things that He might become a merciful and faithful High Priest in the things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

2 Tim. 1:10 But now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who nullified death and brought life and incorruption to light through the gospel,

II. IN CRUCIFIXION

A. Tasting Death on Behalf of Everything

Although, as a youth, I was told again and again that Christ died on the cross for our sins, I was never told that He tasted death on behalf of everything (2:9). Christ tasted death not only for human beings but for everything, every creature. Have you ever heard this? Have you ever heard that Christ tasted death for the animals? Although this may sound quite harsh to your reasoning, if you consult the Greek text of Hebrews 2:9, you will see that the word everything is there. If Christ did not taste death for everything, how could God have reconciled everything to Himself? Colossians 1:20 says that God has reconciled everything to Himself through the death of Christ. Noah's ark is a clear type of this, for in the ark there were not only people but also living creatures. The ark not only saved the people in it; it also saved the creatures. The ark was a picture, a type, of Christ in this respect. The meaning of this is exceedingly deep and it would take us much time to cover it adequately. This is a profound revelation. Be impressed that Christ not only tasted death for man but also for all other things. This is the reason that we say that Christ's death was an all-inclusive death.

B. Making Propitiation for the Sins of God's People

In His death Christ made propitiation for the sins of God's people (2:17). The Greek word for propitiation here is hilaskomai which means to appease, to reconcile one by satisfying the other's demand, that is, to propitiate. The Lord Jesus made propitiation for our sins to reconcile us to God by satisfying God's righteous demands on us. Thus, He has appeased God for us.

Christ died on the cross to taste death for us and to appease God for us. By His tasting of death, death has been abolished (2 Tim. 1:10). By His propitiation, He has fully appeased God for us. Now we are neither under death nor sin. Although there are death and sin in the universe, because of Christ's death, His all-inclusive crucifixion, we are through with death and sin. Do not care for your feelings. Do not say that you lack the feeling that death and sin are over. Your feelings are a lie. God says that it is so. Are you going to trust your feelings or God's Word? I do not care about how I feel. I only care for God's Word. The Bible says that death has been abolished and that Christ has made propitiation for our sins.

C. Destroying the Devil

Beside death and sin, we have another problem—the devil. In His crucifixion Christ also destroyed the devil (2:14).

The Greek word translated destroy may also be rendered as “bring to nought, make of none effect, do away with, abolish, annul, discard.” After the devil, the serpent, seduced man into the fall, God promised that the seed of woman would come to bruise the head of the serpent (Gen. 3:15). In the fullness of time, the Son of God came to become flesh (John 1:14; Rom. 8:3), by being born of a virgin (Gal. 4:4), that He might destroy the devil in man's flesh through His death in the flesh on the cross. This was to abolish Satan, to bring him to nought. Hallelujah, Satan has been abolished and done away with!

Perhaps you will say, “How could the devil have been destroyed when he is still so prevailing?” It is a lie to say that the devil is prevailing. The Bible never says this. Do not believe in this lie. The Bible says that the devil has been bruised, destroyed. His head has been crushed. Are you going to believe your

feelings or God's Word? God's Word tells us that through His death on the cross Christ has destroyed the devil. This is an accomplished fact, a fact that is included in the Holy Word as the testament bequeathed to us. We need to take this bequest by faith according to the Holy Word.

D. Releasing Us from the Slavery under the Fear of Death

Christ's death has also released us from the slavery under the fear of death (2:15). Since through His death Christ has tasted death for us and has destroyed the devil who has the might of death, His death has released us from the slavery in which we were held through the fear of death. We have been released from this slavery. Because of the all-inclusive crucifixion of Christ, there is no more death, no more sin, no more devil, no more fear of death, and no more slavery. By His mercy, the Lord has opened our eyes and has shown us the all-inclusiveness of His death. And through experience we do realize that death, sin, the devil, the fear of death, and slavery were all truly crossed out in Christ's crucifixion.

III. IN RESURRECTION

Following His death, Christ was resurrected. This is the most meaningful matter in life. But it has never been adequately realized, even by genuine regenerated Christians. Because the thoughtful people were not given the adequate teaching regarding Christ's resurrection, Satan filled their minds with the modernistic thought that resurrection is superstitious. In 1936 I was invited to preach to the students in the leading university in China. One night, in a professor's home, an intelligent student who had been born in a Christian family asked me a question. He said that, according to the scientific view, he could not believe in resurrection in a superstitious way and he asked me to explain it to him. The Lord was with me and I pointed out that this matter of resurrection is commonly found in nature. That professor's residence had many windows through which we could see wheat fields. I said to that student, "Look at the fields. Do you see the wheat that is growing there? Can't you see resurrection in that wheat field? The seed is sown into the soil, dies, and eventually the wheat comes forth. This is resurrection. Every day and everywhere you can see resurrection. A hen sits upon a chicken egg, the shell breaks, and a baby chicken comes out. Does not this point to death and resurrection? Do not consider that this is my philosophical mind, for my mind is not that intelligent. This is the teaching of the Bible." When he asked me where, I said that in 1 Corinthians 15 Paul tells us that the seed which dies and grows again is a picture of resurrection. That night this young man was saved and today he is a leading co-worker on the island of Taiwan. The low preaching of the gospel would have been unable to convince such a thoughtful university student.

A. To Bring Forth Many Brothers

Hebrews 2:11-12 indicates that in resurrection Christ has brought forth many brothers. Through His resurrection we were regenerated (1 Pet. 1:3). His death released the divine life from within Him and His resurrection imparted the life of God into us in order that we might become the many sons of God and His many brothers. He was the one grain of wheat falling into the ground, dying, and growing up to bring forth many grains, which are we (John 12:24). He was the one grain and we are now the many grains, His many brothers, brought forth by Him in His resurrection. So immediately after His resurrection He called us His brothers (John 20:17).

B. To Declare the Father's Name to His Brothers

In His resurrection Christ not only brought forth many brothers, but He came to His brothers and declared to them the Father's name (2:12). What is the Father's name? This is a great matter. The Father's name is simply the Father. The Father is His name.

The Father means the source of life and the source of being. From where did you receive your life? You received it from your father. From where did you receive your being? Also from your father. The Father is the source. We are all out of Him. The Sanctifier, the Firstborn Son, and all the sanctified ones, the many sons, are all out of the one Father. On the day of His resurrection, the Lord declared the Father's name to the disciples. From that day on Peter came to realize that he had the divine nature. So, in his second Epistle, Peter said that we are "partakers of the divine nature," having received "all things that pertain unto life and

Week 4 – Day 5 (5/4)(Cont'd)

godliness” (2 Pet. 1:4, 3). How is it that we have received the divine nature and that all things pertaining to life have been given to us? Because we were all born of the Father. The name Father means a great deal to us.

C. To Praise the Father in the Church

In resurrection, Christ not only declared the Father’s name to His brothers, but also praised the Father in the church (2:11-12). When the Lord declared the Father’s name to His brothers, He praised the Father’s name in the church. The brothers are the church. Individually speaking, they are His brothers and collectively speaking, they are the church brought forth in His resurrection. In the evening of the day of His resurrection His brothers gathered together, and He came to meet with them. That was the first church meeting. The first church meeting was not on the day of Pentecost. On the day of Pentecost the church was enlarged, but the first church meeting was in the evening of the day of the Lord’s resurrection. In the church meeting the Lord not only declared the Father’s name to His brothers, but also praised the Father in the midst of the church.

IV. IN GLORIFICATION

A. Entering into Glory

After resurrection, Christ was glorified, not only in the manifestation of His divine nature but also in the ascension into God’s glory. As the Captain of our salvation, Christ, in His ascension, has entered into the glory in which God is. God’s desire is to bring His many sons into glory (2:10). Christ took the lead to enter into this glory as the Pioneer (6:20). The Jesus who was despised by man on earth is glorified by God in heaven. We all must look unto Him in glory.

B. Crowned with Glory and Honor

Christ has not only entered into glory but has also been crowned with glory and honor (2:9). Glory is His divine splendor, and honor is the worth of His preciousness in His virtues and His dignity in His position. Man crowned Him with thorns to shame Him (John 19:2), but God crowned Him with glory and honor to glorify Him. We saw Him on the cross on earth with the crown of thorns, but now we see Him on the throne in heaven crowned with glory and honor. This is the Jesus revealed in the book of Hebrews.

V. IN EXALTATION

Christ’s ascension, which followed His resurrection, was an exaltation. From the earthly viewpoint, it was an ascension from man, but from the heavenly viewpoint, it was an exaltation by God.

A. To Have Dominion over All Creatures

After Christ had been crowned with glory and honor in His ascension, God gave Him the dominion over all things in His exaltation (2:7). This is similar to what God did with Adam. Adam lost the dominion that God gave to him, but, according to the prophecy of Psalm 8, Christ has recovered what Adam lost. Now the same dominion has been given to the second man. Are you in the first man or the second? We all must reply, “We were born in the first man, but we were reborn in the second man.” We were born in the first man and lost everything with him. But since we have been reborn in the second man, we have regained everything. The second man has been glorified, crowned with glory and honor, and entrusted with the divine dominion that was lost by the first man.

B. To Be over All Things

In His exaltation, Christ was made Head over all things (2:8). God has subjected all things under His feet. Now He is only waiting for one thing—for the subtle Satan and all His enemies to be made His footstool.

We see Jesus in these aspects of incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, glorification, and exaltation. We do not see Him in the low way of tradition, but in the high way of Hebrews 2.

Study Questions

1. What is Hebrews a book of comparison?
2. How is Christ shown to be superior to the angels in Hebrews 1:4-12?