

The Heir of All Things

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[0 : 0 0] Well, this past week I've been reading from an Advent devotional which draws from the Bible book of Hebrews. And for me, Hebrews is a familiar and precious book of the Bible.

! But I don't think I've really thought too much about how some of the things in that book relate to Christmas and the birth of Jesus. The book of Hebrews begins in this way.

In the past, God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways.

But in these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son. There's quite a lot of the Bible's history covered by these words.

The prophets, men who spoke for God, go back as far as the days of Abraham, thousands of years before Jesus was born. We're reminded here that God has been speaking for a long time.

[1 : 0 3] He spoke to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And He spoke to and through men like Moses, Samuel, King David, and Elijah.

These words really do invite us to think back over the whole story of God and all that He has said. And as we do, there is so much. What would we know about God had He not spoken in many times, at many times and in various ways?

We might deduce from the natural world that the Creator is powerful and wise. But beyond that, what would we know of Him? Almost everything we know about God is because He has deliberately spoken to us at many times and in various ways.

It's how we know He is loving and kind. It's how we know He's just and righteous. It's how we know that He's compassionate and generous.

It's how we know that He rules over all, even the hearts of men. Because He has spoken at many times and in various ways.

[2 : 2 9] We know what He requires of us. We know His commands, which He's given for our benefit. And we also know His many great, wonderful promises.

The promises He's made to His people through the centuries. Just think of the entire Old Testament. God has said quite a lot over the years.

But in these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son. We get a sense from these words that Jesus is the great climax of God's revelation.

There was all that was said for thousands of years before. But as Tim Chester, the author of the devotional I was reading, put it, Jesus is the final word.

It's not as though God never speaks after the arrival of Jesus in various ways. He does. But if we think about how God speaks after Jesus' arrival, it all comes back to Jesus.

[3 : 3 8] The apostles are sent by Jesus. They speak on His behalf. The Holy Spirit is sent by Jesus. The great ending to the story of our world, which is told to us in the book of Revelation, at the end of the Bible, even it has Jesus.

The Lamb has the central figure. And the throne that He sits on and the city that He brings for His people. In that book, Jesus says, I am the Alpha and the Omega.

That's the first and last letter of the Greek alphabet. The beginning and the end. Jesus really is the last word.

The final word of God. He is God's ultimate and greatest revelation. Jesus said on more than one occasion, I am the light of the world.

And what does light do? It illuminates things. It enables us to see. It reveals. To say it another way, the thousands of years of history in the Old Testament are in some ways like the dark ages of our world.

[5 : 00] But with the coming of Jesus, God's Son, the dark ages are forever over. Light has dawned for mankind. What God did through the prophets long ago pales in comparison to this.

This is not just another prophet. This is God's own Son. And let's see how this is so different in the words that follow. But in these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, and through whom also He made the universe.

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

So what God is doing through His Son is different than what He did through the prophets in all kinds of ways. First, He tells us who this Son of God is. He is the one whom God has appointed heir of all things.

That alone we could ponder a long time. What does it mean to be the heir of all things? Heir speaks of inheritance.

[6 : 29] We think naturally of what a person receives when a parent dies, if anything was left in the estate. You might wonder if you will receive an inheritance from your parents when they die, and if so, what it will be.

Or, you might be thinking even now of what your kids will get from you when you die. Will there be much left for them from your working years if you die at an old age?

What is inherited by the Son of God? And the answer He gives is all things.

Everything. God has appointed His Son heir of all things. That's mind-blowing.

Let's think of some of that, what that includes. It includes everything that belongs to God. Everything that there is. We could start with a list of some small stuff.

[7 : 34] The stuff of earth. Land. All the land. The houses. The possessions of people who live on the earth. The treasures of the earth. The creatures of the earth.

Even we. He made us. We belong to Him. All included in all things. The earth itself as a whole is part of the all things that He is heir of.

The sun. The moon. The stars. The distant galaxies. The whole universe. God has appointed His Son to be heir of all things.

Everything that there is. Which means that God's Son Jesus will be over all. Ruler of everything.

Master of all. Owner and King of all. The Lord of the universe and everything in it. How does Jesus get this crazy inheritance?

[8 : 47] Well it says that God appointed Him heir. It's God Himself who made the decision that He would receive it. And God can do that because everything in the universe belongs to Him. and so He can give it to His Son. There was nothing like this happening with the prophets of the Old Testament times.

This is what makes the Son of God the ultimate and the greatest. God has appointed Him to inherit all things. Lying there in the manger in Bethlehem was not just the Messiah but God's heir.

The one God will make Lord of the universe. And with this He's just getting started. Just in case we didn't know the author of Hebrews reminds us that it was through His Son that God made the universe in the first place and through whom also He made the universe.

This is one of the great mysteries of our faith. God made the universe through His Son before Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

[10 : 08] How can that be? We wonder. Well passages like these in the Bible remind us that the Son of God existed long before Jesus was born. The birth of God's Son wasn't the beginning of His Son.

As the Apostle John wrote, He became flesh and dwelt among us. The Son of God already existed and He simply took on human flesh at a moment in time.

the Divine Son was united with humanity. He became one of us. The Eternal Son of God became a true Son of Man.

It wasn't just God's heir to all things lying there in the manger. This is difficult to grasp but it was the One who Himself made all things lying there in the manger.

The Creator of the universe in a feeding trough. And again the author of Hebrews is just getting started.

[11 : 21] Listen to what more he has to say about the Son of God. Verse 3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being sustaining all things by His powerful Word.

Wow. Here's the ultimate contrast between the prophets of old and the Son of God. They were men, mere men speaking on God's behalf but the Son of God is Himself the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being.

These are deep words the radiance of God's glory. We know that God is glorious. His glory is in the devotional I was reading Tim Chester referred to it as His perfections.

His glory is His perfections. It's the things about God, the things about His character that are good, beautiful, powerful, praiseworthy. Who He is glorious.

And so what does it mean that the Son is the radiance of His glory? Well, radiance is what shines forth. It's the light that's cast by the flame.

[12 : 51] It's the rays of the sun, what we see from the light. And so Jesus is the visible shining forth of God's glory.

to say it another way, what is glorious about God is truly visible in Christ Jesus, His Son. God's glory is on display in and through Jesus.

This is why I'm eager as a pastor to spend years of the life of our church and of my life preaching through the Gospels. The glory of God can be seen in the person of Jesus Christ.

He is the radiance of God's glory. Not only that, but He's the exact representation of God's being.

This is quite a thing. Sometimes we might be tempted to think that Jesus is somehow just a shadow of who God is. A dim reflection. But no, the very glory of God is on display in and through Jesus.

[14 : 02] And there is nothing misrepresented. He perfectly images to us the Father. We may speak of Jesus' human flesh veiling His glory.

Or we may speak of the Son of God temporarily laying some measure of His glory aside to come down and save us. But in all this, the perfections of God were and still are perfectly represented in Jesus.

This is why Jesus could say, if you've seen me, you've seen the Father. This is how He could say, I and the Father are one.

Get to know Jesus and you get to know God. He is the exact representation of God's being. What Jesus lacked in glory while He walked the earth, we will see someday when He returns as the exalted heir of all things.

This is one reason why the birth of Jesus is so worth celebrating. Not just the Messiah, not just the heir, not just the Creator, but the fullest, most visible revealing of God to us has come with the birth of this baby boy.

[15 : 32] The radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being lay there in the manger. Things the prophets could never convey to us there in the manger.

water. If all that wasn't enough wonder to behold, the author of Hebrews reminds us that the Son is the one who is right now sustaining all things by His powerful Word.

Again, this is truly mind-blowing. We can't even fathom how He does this. Yes, He is man, one of us, but He is also divine.

He is also God. He is right now doing what God alone does. He's holding the universe together by His powerful Word.

When I look around at the world that we live in, and I'm talking about the natural world, what I see is amazing complexity and astonishing order.

[16 : 50] The way the weather changes, somewhat predictably according to certain patterns, and yet often we can't predict it. There's a balance, there's an order to the weather which keeps our whole world from freezing to death, or from being scorched to death.

There's the rain cycle. cycle. I'm not even well versed enough in it to explain it well, but you've probably heard something like that before.

All of these things work together to sustain life. Break some of these systems and cycles and many living things on the planet would die. Then there's the complexity of life itself.

Consider the numerous systems at work just in the human body. systems which give us sight, voice, touch, and feel, hearing.

It's amazing. I can't even comprehend how a pump can circulate blood to all the cells in my body continuously bringing them the oxygen they need to sustain that cellular life in each different kind of cell in each different organ in my body.

[18 : 14] The pump is controlled by the brain. And the brain is sustained by the pump. By the blood flowing to it from the pump.

Who keeps these things from falling apart in a day or two? The answer is Jesus, the Son of God. He sustains all things by his powerful word.

It was the sustainer of all things who lay there in the manger in Bethlehem. One more line here.

The author of Hebrews still in verse 3 says, Finally, we hear something about our redemption.

And surprisingly, maybe, it's not even the main point. Jesus, the Son of God, provided purification for our sins.

[19 : 21] This is what Jesus accomplished by his death on the cross. He provided a way for us to be made clean and pure of that guilt that we have because of the sins that we've committed.

An amazing gift of grace, and the author of Hebrews will return to talk about that a lot later on in this letter. But his main point here is actually in the last line.

And it's what Jesus did after he had provided purification for sins. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the majesty in heaven.

Jesus took his seat on the throne at the right hand of God. Right now, Jesus is sitting on heaven's throne with his father.

The one to be heir of all things has reached the highest position of authority that there is. The son's birth in Bethlehem is something worthy of celebration.

[20 : 38] We should look back to the manger with joy and I hope we do this Christmas. But far greater than that is where Jesus is now and what that means for all of us.

We should look up to heaven's throne where the one who was born now sits as heir of all things and lord of the universe.

He rules now. And in the fullness of time his rule will break forth the fullness of it upon our world.

He will come again and he will fulfill the rest of God's good promises to us. Christmas points us ahead. And so as we head into our celebrations again this year, I just want to encourage us to fix our eyes on Jesus, the Christ of Christmas.

Let's celebrate him, the final word of God to us, the heir of all things, the maker and sustainer of all things, the radiance of God's glory, the one who provided purification for our sins, and the one who now sits on heaven's throne.

[22 : 01] It's his birth that we celebrate. Let's pray. Lord Jesus, as Christmas draws near, we ask that we wouldn't be caught up in the things that so often and easily distract us at this time of year.

We ask that we wouldn't be drawn into the emptiness of our world's celebration celebration of what they now call the holiday.

we want to fix our eyes on you, Jesus. Help us do that. Thank you that you are all these things.

We give you praise for that. We can barely fathom these things. God, we ask for your help to share this good news about who you are to others this Christmas.

Put that news on our lips. Give us courage. Give us boldness to share. Help us to be watching and waiting for those opportunities to speak of you.

[23 : 16] we love you and we pray these things in your name. Amen.