

Hebrews 1:1

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[0 : 00] Let's go again to Hebrews chapter 1 and the words we find in verse 1, God has spoken to us by his son, that's in verse 2, in these last days he has spoken to us by his son or by a son.

It's a pleasure indeed to be back once again with you as a congregation and sharing this act of worship together.

These words were penned by a man of great intellect and great literary skill as well.

And yet no one knows who it was. Calvin says, God only knows. And sometimes those who love God live in obscurity.

Some of those who have great talent also live in obscurity. And this was such a man, a man of outstanding human giftedness and what we'd almost say of human genius, a man who gave those talents to God's own service and to, above all, focus and expound the glory of God's own son.

[1 : 43] The man's not so important. And the message is very important. His words about God's own son. He begins by reminding us here that God spoke in the Old Testament.

That was indeed God's own word to us. God's message to us. God's message to us.

Fables as well. There's gospels. There's parables. There's apocalypse. But in all these various ways, over all these centuries and through all these different kinds of human beings, God was speaking his word to that ancient world.

But also, God speaks to that through these documents to us today with the same clarity and cogency. And yet he says to us, this was not God's last word.

These were prophets. And they had an audience with God. And God shared things with them. And God said, go and tell what I've shared with you.

[3 : 26] But they were prophets. They were servants. And now he says, God's last word has come. And this last word doesn't come through a prophet or a servant.

But it comes through a son. And he highlights that generic identity of Jesus to highlight for us the unique glory of the one through whom God spoke his last word.

Not through a servant. But he spoke through a son. Someone who knows God as well as a son knows a father or a daughter knows a father or a mother.

This intimacy, this familiarity that a son has even at this divine level. And so God spoke to us through a son.

And this is God's last word. There is none to follow until that son comes back again in his divine splendor and glory.

[4 : 40] And he then goes on to expatiate on this theme, on God's own son. And tell us what kind of person this divine son actually was.

And he underlines for us in this opening paragraph three great facts. It covers three great areas. First of all, his relation to the world.

And then his relation to God himself. And then his relation to us.

And I want to look briefly at each of these themes in turn. First of all, Christ in relation to the world or to the universe.

And he puts it succinctly. What he says is quite simply, he made it. Through whom also he made the worlds.

[5 : 47] Father, son, and spirit all acting together. And they made this universe, this world. And that word universe is interesting because, in fact, it's the word ages.

Through whom he made the ages. I think that somewhere in modern physics, time occupies a very special place.

And here, this writer, whether I will or not, defines the universe in terms of time.

He made time. He is not himself a creature of time or in time. But he's the creator of time.

He made space. He made time. Because he is God's son. And he stamped his own impress upon this universe.

[6 : 54] Upon time itself. Upon space itself. Upon the whole biosystem. The astrophysical system. This son of God. Made time. Made it all. In all its vastness. All its splendor. All its beauty. This son of God. This Christ. This one who is now our savior. This one who loves you. This one.

Made time. Made space. Made this whole universe. And he put us in it. Made in his own image.

With a mind. Like his own mind. With a rationality. Which is an image. Of the rationality.

[7 : 55] Of God himself. God himself. And he did this wonderful thing. He adjusted. The time space universe.

To our human intellects. So that. That universe. Is for us. Cognitively friendly. And our little minds.

As images of God's own mind. Are able to understand. To explore. To theorize. To harness even the forces. Of this world in which we live.

So he. Made it. This one. Who will eventually. Come. Cross to us. As the water dies.

On the cross of Calvary. This Jesus. The son of God. He. Made. This universe. And then. He adds this to it.

[8 : 55] He also. He says. Upholds it. He upholds it. By his powerful word. Or by the word of his power.

It was made. By a word. It is. Upheld. By a word. It's kept in being.

It's kept up. By the word of this. Son. Of God. I'm going to take a risk. At this point. Because. I'm told that.

This universe exists. Very very precariously. A long time ago. It was assumed. That it was. Quite wrong.

To assume. Because. We're believers. That the word. Would one day. Come to an end. And we're told. No. The world. Will never end. But. In the current state of science.

[9 : 51] The reverse is the case. There is a certainty. That one day. It will come to an end. By natural causes. Now.

It will end. I know. But it might be not. By natural causes. But. I'm told. That. There are two. Great. Competing. Forces.

That operate. In this universe. Not simply. In our own planet. But in the universe. As a whole. And. These. You know. These forces. Threatened. With.

With. With. With. With. Destruction. With annihilation. That are. There's the energy. That has to be released. By the big bang. In which. I might very well believe.

And. These energies. Are. Pushing. All the stars. Ever. Further. And further. Apart. Until. One day.

[10 : 46] In that process. Continues. We'll collapse. Into a big hole. That's one scenario. Another. There is. That gravity. Is pulling. All these bodies.

Together. Until at last. There is. A great crush. And we perish. In the great crush. Either in the big hole.

Or. In. A great crush. Now. Let's. Assume. For a moment. The reality. Of these. Theorizings.

Christ. Is upholding. Things. He is the master. Of. All. Of these forces. And somehow.

In his infinite wisdom. He maintains. In such a balance. For the time being. That a universe. Continues to exist. He is upholding.

[11 : 42] This Christ. This Jesus of Nazareth. Who is God incarnate. He is keeping. Our world. In being.

So. He made it. He preserves it. But he is also. We are told here. Gently. He is carrying it.

Towards. Its appointed destination. Because. It is not just. There. Static. It is not just. Going round.

In circles. In circles. In cycles. In cycles. Forevermore. But. He is carrying it. Now remember. It is God. We are talking about.

The one. Who made this God. Of infinite power. And wisdom. And presence. And knowledge. He. In his son. Is carrying. The cosmos.

[12 : 38] Towards. A certain moment. And in that moment. He will regenerate it. He will. Re. Generate it.

He will. Recreate it. And there shall be. A new heaven. And. A new earth. earth. And so.

Yes. Our faith. And the current. Consensus. And science. Agree. Yes. One day. It will come to an end. But science.

Says. The purely. Natural causes. Currently. Operating. But. Faith. Says. It will end.

When Christ. So. Decides. And there shall be. A new heaven. A new earth. Now these things. May seem remote. To us.

[13 : 32] But they're at the very core. Of Christian faith. Because. It's a faith. In the supernatural. In a world.

That didn't just happen. Or just evolve. Although it has. Evolution within it. But a world. That once. Wasn't there.

A world. God. Spoken. To be. In a world. That one day. God. Won't annihilate it. But God. Will transform it. He will give it.

A new form. He will. Regenerate. And give us. A new heaven. And. A new earth. God. And then secondly.

This divine son. In relation. To God himself. The brightness. Of God's glory. The express image. Or engraving.

[14 : 28] Of God's person. Who of God's being. I should say. So he is. The radiance. Of God's glory. And the express. Engraving.

Of God's. Very being. Now. These words. Are in many ways. Visual words. They presuppose. Our observer. Our observer.

Somebody. Seeing the sun. That is seeing. God's sun. For example. For the angels. Saw. And see.

God's sun. What do they see? Imagine the angels. And they see. God's sun. God's sun. And they see. You know.

He is the express. Image. Of his father. He is. God. In every respect. He has the glory.

[15 : 27] Of God. And the majesty. Of God. And all the attributes. Of God. And all the beauty. Of God.

And all the gentleness. Of God. God. And the angels. So love him. Because they see. In him. This divine form.

And they're. So enthralled. And today. Those who have gone. Before us. To glory. They see that form. Too. The form. Of splendor. They see.

Christ. At God's. White hand. And the father. And the holy spirit. And they see. And they see. Each of them. Sharing. One.

And the same. Being. One. And the same. Deity. And they see. This form. This glory. This radiance. This splendor.

[16 : 21] They see. God. In. Jesus Christ. Christ. But imagine. This to. Imagine. God. The father.

And he looks. At his son. Want to be careful. Because. There are. Three gods. There is one God. But in that one God. There are three persons. And. There is.

A witness. And. A beside. In. God. And. God. The father. Who is with the son. And beside the son. He looks.

At his son. And he sees. Again. Such splendor. He sees. Himself. He sees. His own face.

He sees. His own glory. And he is so enthralled. By the beauty. Of his own son. And what's. Happened to you. In conversion.

[17 : 15] Is. That. God. The father. Has shared. With you. His own insight. And perception. And above all. His.

His. Appreciation. Of his own son. He loves him. And he knows. Why he loves him. And he wants you.

To love him. And you have. In your own heart. In germ. In image. You have. The love. That the father. Has for God.

The son. You have. That love. In your own hearts. God. That the father. But then. That changed the scene. No longer. In heaven. Where angels.

Look. And God. The father. Looks. But this man. Jesus. Watch him. The son of God. In our nature.

[18 : 10] Walking. This earth. And you say. Well. I don't see. God's form there. I don't see.

Radius. I don't see. Glory. For majesty. Dominion of power. But I see him. Weary. At Jacob's well. And I.

I see him. Weeping. At the tomb of Lazarus. And I see him. Distraught. In Gethsemane. And I see him.

Arrested. By. A cruel. Soldier. And I see him. On the cross. Of Calvary. Between two criminals.

Hanging. Loof. And rugged. And bleeding. And I hear. And cry. Like a man who has spent.

[19 : 09] A misspent life. My God. My God. Why am I a derelict? Why don't you hear me? This man. This man.

This man. He died a terrible death. It was a terrible deathbed. And can you say to me. That here we see. The glory.

And the radiance. And the beauty. And then we say yes. Surely yes. Because here. In the enfleshment of love. Is the glory of God.

Weary. At Jacob's well. There. There. Is love. Weeping. At Lazarus tomb. Love distorting.

Assembly. Dreading. Dreading. Being separated. Dreading the moment. When God won't listen to him. Dreading that moment.

[20 : 07] That moment on the cross. It is love. That hangs on the cross. This Christ. Washing disciples feet.

Is that the most glorious form of all? Who being in the form of God. Washed disciples feet.

Great. God who wonders. All thy ways. Are majestic. Godlike. And divine.

But the fair wonders. Of thy grace. More godlike. And unrivaled shine. Never was God's son.

More beautiful. Than in that moment. When he hangs. Limp and battered. Never was God. Perhaps I should change.

[21 : 06] The whole perspective. Never was God. More majestic. Godlike. Or divine. Never was love. More splendid.

Than in that moment. On the cross. Of Calvary. And then. In relation to us. And it's quite simply this.

He purged our sins. He made the universe. He is the radiance of God's glory.

And he made atonement. For our sin. Oh you know these Hebrews. They were young. Very young Christians.

Very immature Christians. It's amazing what. Great masters of teaching. This writer heaps upon. These young believers.

[22 : 03] And expects them to. Love and to understand. But you know. They had many problems. They were persecuted. They were a very small minority.

Their own families. Often hated them. Turned their backs on them. They were poor. They were in prison. Some of them. But you know.

They had one thing. Which above all else. Mattered to them. And that was this. This great. Burden of sin. It was in that character.

They stood before God. And that's where. All religion begins. The sense. The awareness. The awareness.

The awareness of God. And our awareness of ourselves. As sinners. Before him. You see it in David.

[23 : 03] You know David. You know you read those Psalms of David's. And there's so much about persecution. And about enemies. About affliction.

About the glory of God's. World. About great deliverances. But the recurring theme is. Time and again. Lord have mercy.

I'm a sinner. That was the starting point. And here. This is for this writer. That's the great thing. This.

Son of God. What did he do for me? What is he to us? What's his relevance? He made purgation. He made atonement.

For. Our. Sins. And these people had one great. Pressing cultural problem. They belonged to a people.

- [24 : 02] Where every day. There was a remembrance of sin. And every day. Morning and evening. There was a sacrifice. And every week.
- And every month. And every year. Sin. Sin. Sacrifice. Sacrifice. Sacrifice. And they're saying to themselves. Under some cultural pressure.
- Do we still have to keep up. This endless ritual. Of sacrifices. Is that still to be part. Of our lives. And that's the burden. Often of this. Of this epistle. The great answer. No. Because Christ died.
- Once and for all. And made purgation. For our sins. Now then. You and I. Have never had to worry about.
- [25 : 03] Should we still offer sacrifices. Tomorrow. Or tonight. Or next week. Or whenever. That's not part of our culture. But what's our own idea.
- As to purging your sins. Making atonement for our sins. As well. If we repent. Repent. And then we say.
- Do you mean to tell me. That I've got to keep on. Repenting. And repenting. And repenting. And repenting. Repenting. Repenting. Repenting. Every day. For this sin.
- That for the rest of my life. It's a burden to me. These sins. That past. That past. What Dr. Lloyd-Jones called. This one sin. Has it to be always there.
- And must I make atonement for it myself. By the labor of my hands. And by my zeal. Without respite. By my own fulfilling.
- [26 : 02] Of laws. Divine laws. Or my own laws. How am I to deal. Deal. With this sin. This sin that God has.
- Reminded them of. Reminded us of. How do we deal with it. We don't come with a lamb. To atone for our sin. Instead. We torment ourselves.
- And that's why. This is so. Hugely important. By himself. It's not in your version. Exactly. But it is. And there's a textual difficulty there.
- But the. Translation should still be. That. He. Personally. By himself. And it's in the past. It's not ongoing.
- Atonement is not. A daily. Obligation. Or a charge. Upon me. It's been done. For us.
- [27 : 04] And you know. The sins. We confessed. Yesterday. Have you any idea. Where they are. And I say.
- Yesterday. And I say. Confessed. Things. You knew. You knew. Two things. About them. You knew. They were wrong.
- And you knew. You did them. And you confessed them. Where are they now? And you know. Far too often.
- You know. Where they are. They are still on your conscience. Where they shouldn't be. Because that was yesterday.
- And you confessed them. And you put them over. On the Lamb of God. To bear the sin of the world. And where did God put them?
- [28 : 02] In the sea of his forgetfulness. Buried them. Deep. In that. Spiritual ocean. Of infinite depth. Buried them there.
- But as the psalmist says. He put them. As far as. East. From the west. They are at the other. End of the universe.
- Yesterday sins. Because he brought them. To the Lamb of God. And he bore them. And he. As a great high priest.

Made a torment for them. By his own obedience. And blood. My saviour's. Obedience and blood.

Hide all my transgressions. From you. I'm not sure. That I'm preaching to sinners. That are rare breed nowadays.

[29 : 07] But without that sense. Of divine holiness. And human sinfulness. Not simply human finitude. Or bewilderment.

Or fragility. But sin. There can be no religion. I saw a prayer somewhere this week.

Prayer that said. That asked God. To. Lord. Enlighten my conscience. But don't storm it.

Because when God does storm. A conscience. It's a dreadful. Dreadful thing. But today. Can we grasp.

That yesterday's confessed sins. Are forgiven. That Christ's obedience. Covers my disobedience.

[30 : 12] And Christ's pain. Takes a place. Of my pain. That's what I said about his believers.

About. God's own son. He made the universe. He radiates God's glory. But.

At the personal. Personal. Level. Above all else. He made atonement. For my sin. May God help us rest there.

Let's. Again join in prayer. Oh Lord. We bless you for your word. In all this. Greatness.

It's holiness. It's clarity. It's relevance. May it Lord. Become. Be your word to us this morning.

[31 : 12] It's your word anyway. May our hearts respond to it. With faith. And obedience. Lord.

If there are troubled consciences here this morning. Speak. Your own peace to them.

And may they find. In the work of Christ. Peace with God. A joyful sense of forgiveness.

For your glory's sake. In him. Amen. Amen.