

MOVING TOWARD MATURITY

THE HEAVENLY JESUS

TEXT: Hebrews 1:1-3 (NKJV)

INTRODUCTION: Today I begin a new series of sermons with you that will be centered in the study of a book written to a congregation like ours. It was written to a group of Christians whom God was MOVING TOWARD MATURITY. To be sure, there were mixed in with that congregation of believers those who had not yet genuinely trusted Christ, but the author of the book identified himself with them as brothers in the Lord and fellow believers in Jesus Christ. They were different from us in race and culture. They were Hebrews, but they were very much like us in many ways. Their understanding, their fears, their problems, their frailties were very much like our own. And even more important than that, God's desire and purpose for them was very much like God's desire and purpose for us. So today we begin a series entitled MOVING TOWARD MATURITY, A Study of the Book of Hebrews.

Turn in your Bibles to the beginning of the book of Hebrews and we will stand and read the first three verses.

Hebrews 1:1-3 (NKJV) ¹ God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, ² has in these last days spoken to us by *His Son*, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; ³ who being the brightness of *His* glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

The Holy Spirit, the ultimate author of this book, begins with a reference to the Old Testament Scriptures with which the original Hebrew recipients were familiar. He says that in the past God spoke in various times and ways through the prophets. He summarizes what most of you know that the Old Testament was penned by more than 30 different people over a period of more than 1400 years. But in so describing the Old Testament Scriptures, the Spirit denotes the most important fact about them: it was God speaking. **The Old Testament is the Word of God.**

We should note several things about God's speaking through the Old Testament. First, because it was God doing the speaking, **it was a perfect word**. "The law of the Lord is perfect!" said the Spirit through the Psalmist. **But it was not a complete word** or a finished word. In fact, the whole reason the Old Testament is even mentioned in this passage is to tell us about an additional Word of God spoken after Old Testament times. **This new word would come through the Son of God.** Even He would say

that He had not come to destroy the former word but rather to fulfill and complete it. **He would be the completing word, the finished word, the final word.** And He, **the Lord Jesus Christ, is the focus of this book written to take** those Jewish believers and **us** Gentile believers **toward maturity.** And it is with a focus upon Him that we begin our study this morning. From the first three verses of this marvelous book, we see a picture of THE HEAVENLY JESUS.

John MacArthur notes in commenting upon this passage that "Someone has said that...

Jesus Christ came from the bosom of the Father to the bosom of a woman.

He put on humanity that we might put on divinity.

He became Son of Man that we might become sons of God.

He was born contrary to the laws of nature, lived in poverty, was reared in obscurity...

He had no wealth or influence and had neither training nor education in the world's school.

His relatives were inconspicuous and uninfluential.

In infancy He startled a king.

In boyhood He puzzled the learned doctors.

In manhood He ruled the course of nature.

He walked upon the billows and hushed the sea to sleep.

He healed the multitudes without medicine and made no charge for His services.

He never wrote a book and yet all the libraries of the world could not hold the books about Him.

He never wrote a song, yet He has furnished the theme for more songs than all songwriters together.

He never founded a college, yet all the schools together cannot boast of as many students as He has.

He never practiced medicine and yet He has healed more broken hearts than all the doctors have healed broken bodies.

This Jesus Christ is the star of astronomy, the rock of geology, the lion and the lamb of zoology, the harmonizer of all discords, and healer of all diseases.

Throughout history great men have come and gone, yet He lives on.

Herod could not kill Him.

Satan could not seduce Him.

Death could not destroy Him, and the grave could not hold Him.”

And today, God has spoken through Him. He is His Son! And in the next verse and a half we have a seven dimension portrait of our heavenly Prince.

I. HE IS THE HEIR OF ALL THINGS.

A. The Psalms declared the promise of Christ’s inheritance.

Psalm 2:8 Ask of Me, and I will give *You* The nations *for* Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth *for* Your possession.

B. Revelation declares the fulfillment of that promise.

Revelation 5:9 And they sang a new song, saying: “You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,

C. All who trust in Christ are joint heirs with Him.

Listen my friend, you may never inherit anything from your earthly family, but if you have trusted Christ, He is your brother; and you are a joint heir with Him of all the things in the universe.

Romans 8:16-17 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

II. HE IS THE CREATOR.

A. Before anything else was, He was.

John 1:1-3 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

Jesus is the Word. Read this with me putting the name Jesus everywhere you see “the Word.”

John 1:1-3 In the beginning was Jesus, and Jesus was with God, and Jesus was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

B. All things were made by Him.

It is no small insult to the Risen Savior and Exalted Lord for a man or a woman to chose to believe the God denying philosophy called evolution, rather than the Christ exalting testimony of creation as declared in the Scriptures.

And for all of you who hold the Scriptures to be the sacred and God's Word to be true, you should note that the same Almighty God Who declares that Jesus was His one and only Son, the single sacrifice for sin upon the cross, and the only One by Whom you can be saved, also declares that His Son, Who will inherit all things, was the One who began all things and created this universe. And of that work the Holy Scripture says, "In six days, the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them..." Ex. 20:11

III. HE IS THE RADIANCE OF GOD'S GLORY.**A. No one has ever seen the fullness of God. Man has only seen glimpses of His radiance, His glory.**

1. The glory of the Lord appeared to Moses in the burning bush
2. to Israel in the pillar of fire
3. to the High Priest as the Shekinah above the mercy seat
4. to the shepherds when the glory of the Lord shone round about them.

You may be thinking, "Oh I wish I could have seen that!" But these were only glimpses of the glory of God, like getting a peek at a celebrity through a massive crowd. But

B. Jesus is the full radiance of God's glory.

John 8:12 Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

C. If you want the radiance and glory of God in your life, invite Christ to come in.

And when Jesus is in you life, you do not just peek at His glory; His glory shines within you, and one day you shall see the brilliance of that glory face to face.

IV. HE IS THE EXACT IMAGE OF GOD.**A. Image means the "stamp," the exact likeness.****B. If you want to know what God is like, look at Jesus Christ.**

Colossians 2:9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;

V. HE IS THE SUSTAINER OF THE UNIVERSE.

A. Jesus not only made this world, He sustains it.

1. If the earth's tilt on its axis shifted just a few degrees, life would end.
2. If the moon drew only slightly closer in its orbit, the tides would engulf the continents.
3. If the depths of the oceans suddenly changed, the life sustaining balance between oxygen and carbon dioxide would no longer be sustained.
4. If the density of our atmosphere were reduced, we would be immediately plagued with bombardment from life destroying meteors.
5. Jesus not only made it right, He keeps it right, until His time and His purpose is accomplished.

B. Jesus also sustains this world spiritually and morally.

1. Morally and spiritually He will allow a Christian to get only so far out of tilt, and He will take his life.
2. Morally and spiritually He will allow a nation to get only so far out of line, and He will cause it to fall.
3. Morally and spiritually He will allow this world to get only so far out of plumb with His line of righteousness, and He will return and rule the nations with a rod of iron and establish His Holy Kingdom.

VI. HE IS THE SACRIFICE FOR SIN.

A. Jesus is the only sinless sacrifice.

B. His death was the only atoning work acceptable to the Father.

C. He is the way, the truth, the life, the only way to the Father.

VII. HE IS THE ONE SEATED AT GOD'S RIGHT HAND.

A. The right hand is the place of honor.

B. The right hand is the place of **authority.**

C. The right hand is the place of **power.**

Philippians 2:9-11 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee

should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, ¹¹ and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

CONCLUSION: Every knee! Every tongue. Every people.

In these days, God has spoken through His Son.

Have you heard Him?

Have you listened to Him?

Have you responded to Him in faith?

Are you following Him?