

# Hebrews 1, 2 & 3 - Part 1

by T. Austin-Sparks

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*The sermon explores the profound implications of God's final revelation through Jesus Christ as the last Adam and the call for believers to embrace their identity and inheritance in Him.*

**Duration:** 56:32

**Scripture:** Exodus 25:10, Hebrews 1:1-3, Hebrews 1:10, Hebrews 2:11, Hebrews 3:1, Hebrews 6:5

**Topics:** "Expositional"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of looking again at Jesus and understanding the greatness of Christ. The speaker encourages the audience to recognize that there is nothing greater than being joined to Jesus and being a fellow member of Christ. The sermon highlights the significance of hearing God speak in His Son and emphasizes that God has spoken to us through Jesus, who is the heir of all things and the image of God's substance. The speaker urges the audience to give earnest heed to the things that were heard and to open the letter to the Hebrews for further understanding.

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## Transcript

A letter to the Hebrews, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by diverse portions and in diverse manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his son. Chapter two, therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away from them. We have said something earlier about this final speaking of God by the way of his son.

We have pointed out that in God speaking son-wise, it was not only what the son said, but God's speech was the possum of his son. What the son was and is as an embodiment, representation, and expression of God's thoughts, of God's mind. By way of the living possum, God has made himself known to man, and that particularly as to man.

That is, what God's thoughts are concerning man. It might be of some great value if God had just spoken about himself, about his own character, and nature, and being, that would be very good, and perhaps wonderful. But we might be left with that as something in itself.

Well, it's a good thing to know that God is in existence, and what kind of a God he is. But God's making of himself known is not just by way of information as to his existence, and as to his character. The Bible, as a whole, makes this quite clear, that God's self-revelation is vitally related to man, and man is vitally related to that.

Or in other words, the sum of God's thoughts is a relationship between man and himself, and himself and man. And it is in his son, Jesus Christ, that that relationship is brought about between God and man, man and God. And it is just there that the first utterance or expression of God is found.

Why should God become man? Why the incarnation? Why should he take flesh, be made flesh, and tabernacle among us? Why should God's speech be by incarnation? That's his first speech, and his final speech, and his full speech. Well, you see, everything in the Bible just focuses upon this, that in Christ a union has been brought about between God and man. The Old Testament types and figures and symbols always bear down upon that.

The central thing, for instance, in that great symbolic system of the tabernacle, central to the life of Israel, the central thing was the Ark of the Testimony, the Ark of the Covenant. That was central. Everything focused upon that.

And you know that it was made of acacia wood, always the type of humanity, overlaid with gold, always the type of divinity. So that there, in that central thing, placed right in the most holy place where God met with man, spoke to him, and man met with God, between the cherubim, on that mercy seat which was the lid of the Ark, you have this great declaration, God's thought right at the center of everything. The central thing in his whole system is union between himself and man in Christ.

Christ is God's speech in that sense. God has spoken in his Son. Formerly he spoke in various, numerous ways and forms of expression.

We have seen by people, by their offices as prophets and priests and kings, by their work in sacrifices, altars, and so on. By many symbols and types and figures, God spoke in a multitude of ways, in fragmentary forms of different things. One period, the first period, is the period of priesthood, sacrifice, mediation.

That lasted for a period. It changed to another period of kingship and monarchy, and God spoke again in a different way through kings from what he did through priests. And then that gave place to the period of the prophets, and God spoke now through prophets, not kings and priests, through prophets.

He speaks in diverse manners at different times in the past, but now he's gathered it all up. It's all gathered up. Every form of old is now collected, so to speak, and concentrated in one person who embodies all the speech of God, and there's no more, it's final, at the end of these days.

At the end of these days. These days in which he has spoken in these many ways and forms at the end. There's nothing after the end.

Nothing after the end. Christ is the end of God's speaking. If you don't listen to him, there's nothing more to come.

He's the end. God has spoken at the end in sonship, his son, because of the transcendent fullness of his speech in Christ. Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were harrowed.

More earnest heed. Now this evening we're going to get a little further into this letter to the Hebrews, which I trust you have opened before you. This afternoon we were walking round it, looking at it from the outside, and we seek to break into it and get something of its inward message to us.

Taking this, the things which were harrowed, these are the things to which we ought to give the more earnest heed. Because as we said earlier, from the whole tone of this letter, so serious, so solemn, so imperative, there's something bound up with this hearing, this spiritual hearing of God speaking in his son, which is of momentous consequence to the people of God. The things which were harrowed are the things that God has said in his son.

Let me say again, not only through his son, but in his son. That is, what does Christ say to us as God's message? What is he as the message of God to us? It's a very comprehensive message, far, far too big for a brief season like this, two or three days. But we can take some of its parts, and we begin at the beginning.

The Apostle Paul, who if he didn't write this letter to the Hebrews, I'm quite sure had a lot of influence in it. You can trace his finger in it at any rate. You can find him somewhere very much in this letter.

We're not going to argue about authorships, but there you are. I'm certain that he had a lot to do with it. That being true or not true, it doesn't matter very much, but the Apostle Paul, under the same Holy Spirit as dictated this letter, has given us so much as to the significance of Christ, and has helped us tremendously as we seek to enter into this letter.

You notice the movement of this letter right at the beginning. The first chapter, a marvelous presentation of the greatness of the Lord Jesus as God's Son. There are things here which are altogether beyond us.

We need to read and read and read again, quietly and thoughtfully, and allow every clause to affect us. Just begin to read. God at the end of these days has spoken unto us in his Son.

Now listen. Whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he made the ages, who being the effulgence of his glory, the very image of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power. You grasp that? Any one of those things.

These are tremendous things to say. And note, they are said about one who is called his Son. Go on a little later.

Having become so much better than the angels, as he hath inherited a more excellent name than they, unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son. This day have I begotten thee. The answer of course to the question is to man.

Not one, Michael, or any of the archangels. They were mighty, mighty beings. See what one angel can do to a whole mighty army of the Assyrian.

One angel went out at God's command, and the whole army was slain that night. One angel. Look again at all the tremendous things that angels did in the Bible.

But to not one of them did God say, Thou art my Son. And again, I will be to him a father. He shall be to me a son.

No, not to the angels. Not to any angel. When he bringeth again the firstborn into the world, he said, Let all the angels of God worship him.

Of the angels, he said, who maketh his angels wind, his ministers a flame of fire, but of the sun. He said, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever. The scepter of uprightness is the scepter of thy kingdom.

Tremendous, isn't it? All this about the sun. Why is that put there at the beginning of the letter? Why is that made the gateway into the letter? The basis upon which the whole letter is founded. Now, read on.

Dismiss these figures that men have introduced to divide up the letter into chapters. That's only a mechanical convenience for public reading. Very often an unfortunate division in the narrative.

Read on as though there were no chapter division. We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that we have heard. Now listen.

For, not unto angels did he subject the world to come whereof we speak, or are speaking. But one has somewhere testified saying, listen, what is man? Not unto angels did he subject the world to come of which we are speaking. But, what is man? That thou art mindful of him, or the son of, not God, the son of man.

That thou makest mention of him. And you go on. Thou madest him for a little while lower than the angels.

Thou crownest him with glory and honor. Didst set him over the works of thy hands. Thou didst put all things in subjection under his feet.

Who is this? To whom did he do all that? Man. Man. That's God's idea for man.

That's why God created man. That was the intention of God. Where man is concerned.

Man. For in that he subjected all things unto him, he left nothing that is not subject to him. But, now we see not, yet all things subjected to him, to man.

But what do we see? What do we see? We do not see that divine intention concerning man, now, true, in operation. Where man, in general, is concerned. But what do we see? But we behold him who hath been made for a little while lower than the angels.

Even Jesus. Notice the name that is used. The name of his humanity.

Even Jesus. Because of the suffering of death. Crowned with glory and honor, crowned with glory and honor, that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man.

What does all that say to you? Well, clearly, this is what it means. God had this great, this wonderful thought concerning man. In the creation of man, let us make man in our own image and after our own likeness.

Let him be set over the works of our hands. Let him have dominion. You remember those words, Genesis? Man, over the works of his hands, having dominion.

God's great thought for man. To be crowned with glory and honor. What is man? Not mindful of him who hath him in mind.

Son of man, that you mark him out. Well, that's the literal meaning of the words. You mark him out.

For this. That was the purpose. He failed.

He disappointed God. He disobeyed God. He rebelled against God.

He took sides with God's enemy. The result? That man is by no means what and where God intended him to be. That race.

That Adam race. What must be done? If God is going to reach his end, and he is going to reach it where man is concerned, he must start again with another Adam. Another Adam.

And it's there that Paul helps us. He calls Jesus the last Adam. Always glad that he calls him the last Adam.

There won't be any need for another one, a third one, or a fourth one. This one will effect it. Fully and finally, he is the last speech of God.

The last divine expression as to his purpose. He is the last Adam. Come to start all over again.

Now this letter, you notice, has a lot from the beginning to say about this. This one. This last Adam.

This second man. Last Adam. The writer says about believers, he is not ashamed to call them brethren.

Saying, I am the brethren. I am the children whom God has given me. I will sing praise among my brethren.

Starting a new family. Started a new family, this last Adam. And it's the family that is going to come to glory and honor, and the realization of God's thought.

But it's going to take it's character from it's first one. Now that's what I'm going to focus upon, perhaps for the rest of the time this evening. Need not take very long.

Go back to Genesis. Chapter 1, verse 28. The Lord has brought the man into being, and the woman.

He says, be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. Have dominion. What has God done? He spoke.

You know, when God speaks, it's always an act. It's not just a word. It's a fiat.

It's a fiat when God speaks. God said, like the, and the woman. God's words are acts.

When he came in the flesh and spoke, something happened. Always something happened. When God said, be fruitful and multiply, he gave the power of procreation, of multiplication, of reproduction.

Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. In other words, fill the earth with people like yourself. And I give you power to do it.

That's the point of which Satan rushed in. If I can capture those two, if I can capture those two, I'll fill the earth with my likeness, my seed. Capture that power of multiplication, of reproduction, to fill this earth.

Not with the kind that God wants, but with the kind that I want. That was the point. Now I ask you, is that what is happening? You need not look outside of this hall.

Look inside yourself. Have you got an old Adam? Have you? That's our trouble, isn't it? What we call the old Adam. It's become a phrase.

But that first Adam, in broken relationship with God, whose very nature is not to trust God, not to believe God, to suspect God, it's in every one of us. We've only got to be pressed, pressed hard into some real

trouble where it seems that God has left us and immediately, not from outside, but from inside, we begin to question God. To have reservations about the love of God.

There's something that rises in our very constitution. Therein against God. Is it true? If you, of course, haven't got there yet, you'll not be able to say yes, you know, but you will know, sure or later, therein against God.

Is it true? If you, of course, haven't got there yet, you'll not be able to say yes, you know, but you will know, sure or later, that there's something in the constitution of this Adam race, which is rebellion against God in its very nature. Question and doubt as to God. Satan has filled this world with a seed like that.

It's an unbelieving world. A God mistrusting world. And a world very largely full of rebellion against God.

Satan captured, you see, the race for generation after generation along that line of replenishing the earth. That's a terrible thing. But what I'm getting at is here, a last Adam has come.

A last Adam. Not of that order. Not of that order.

But of a heavenly order. With a heavenly nature. Tested.

Tried. In every way, even more fiercely than the first Adam. But without sin.

Triumphant. To a complete victory. And what a victory it is.

Here we read this evening, Tested death in the behalf of every man. You know what death really is, friends? You know what death, death really is. I don't think you do.

I don't think any of us do. No, we don't. We don't.

And thank God it's not necessary for any of us to really know what death means. A little company of friends in Sheffield last night, I was pointing out this. I think I touched on it this afternoon.

That when this son of God was to come into the world, he was announced by an angel. An angel made the annunciation to Mary. An angel came in with the news of the incarnation.

And initiated this thing. When he was actually born, heavens were filled with angels singing and glorifying God. When he was in the wilderness under stress of temptation from the devil, with the devil and the wild beast it says, an angel ministered to him.

When he was in the garden, the awful agony of the garden, an angel came and strengthened him. When he was risen from the dead, angels were there at the tomb. But when he was on the cross, on the cross, no angel.

No angel at all. No voice. No hand to help.

No ministry from heaven. And God himself turning his face aside. That's death.

The utter, utter separation of all that is of heaven, on the behalf of every man, so that we need not taste it. That's death. He tasted death.

Death. On the behalf of every man. He triumphed through that.

Came out victorious. Is seated at God's right hand. What else? Firstborn from the dead.

Firstborn from the dead. The firstborn among many brothers. A family to be reproduced by him.

God has given to him the last Adam. This great power of reproduction. A family after his own likeness.

A family after his own likeness. The Christ family. After the likeness of this last Adam.

Paul says, as we have borne the image of the earthly, so we shall bear the image of the heavenly. Not one of you here tonight doubts or questions that you bear the image of the earthly. That is the old Adam.

We, we do. But, this wonderful letter is telling us that man was not called to that, meant for that. What God is going to do with us is to conform us to the image of his son.

And he begins that by new birth. By new birth. By the reproduction of Christ.

Oh dear friends, lay hold of that fragment. What a mighty thing that is. It's going to carry us all the way through.

What is it that the Christian is meant for? What is a Christian? What does new birth mean? What does it mean to be joined to the Lord? It means the reproduction of Christ in a family, in a race, which is going to replenish this earth. The inhabited earth to come whereof we are speaking. That's the phrase here.

It's going to be peopled with people like Christ. That's what we're called to. That's the tremendous thing that we might miss.

That's the tremendous thing that we must cherish. That is the thing around which all these warnings and exhortations circle. We must give them more earnestly.

Less, less. We miss it. Leave out all your theological and doctrinal questions and problems and face promise.

Here is a book with thirteen chapters if you'd like to let the chapters stand. The whole weight of which comes down upon us. You Christians are called to a tremendous thing which you may miss.

Which you may miss. You can't get away from it. Some people have tried to get round it by saying this letter was not written to Christians at all.

It was written to Jews. That is trying to get round it. As I said this afternoon, you can't apply this letter in any part to non-Christians.

If you, chapter six, tells us, you have tasted the power of the word to come. No non-Christian has ever done that. Many, many other things.

No, this is to Christians. It's all saying you are called to his eternal glory. You are called to conformity to his image.

You are called to be a part of this people. To people. His creation in the ages to come.

An expression of God's thought concerning man. Tremendous thing. It's called the inheritance here.

We'll come back to that some other time. An inheritance is something more than just being in a family. You can be a member of a family because you are born into it.

But that doesn't necessarily make you an heir. It doesn't make you an heir. Plenty of people belong to families but they are not the heirs.

This letter has to do with the inheritance of heirs. Leave that for the moment. Why is Christ presented in this majestic revelation at the beginning? In order, in order, the Holy Spirit should go on and say, you are called to be fellow heirs with that one.

Joined with that one. A part of his inheritance and for the very purpose of God in him. To show his glorious intention when he made man.

You are called to that. Do you see him? It's a tremendous thing, isn't it? To hear words like this at the beginning of chapter 3. What for? Holy brethren. Holy brethren.

Partners in a heavenly calling. Partners in a heavenly calling. Now all the people who are working for the firm are not partners in the firm.

That word here, partakers in some versions, partners in the original, is this business term. The same word is used about the disciples when they were fishing and they were given the miraculous draft. They beckoned unto their partners.

Evidently these two or three families were in a business partnership. And that's the word here. Partners.

Fellow sharers. Fellow sharers. On a basis of mutual relationship in the interests of this business.

Here it is. Holy brethren. Partners in a heavenly calling.

What is this heavenly calling? Partnership with Christ. The apostle, the writer will say this. We are made partners with Christ if we hold fast the confession of our faith from unto the end.

Partners with Christ. I don't want to pile words up and make a mountain too heavy for you to cope with. But my concern, dear friends, is on the one side that we should see how great Christ is.

But why? Why the revelation of Jesus Christ in such majestic terms is given to show us what we are called to as Christians. Partnership with that one. With that one.

In the ages to come. Beginning now thy new birth. Now let me conclude for the moment by coming right back to this focal point.

You see, just as truly as you and I naturally know, we know that that first Adam is in us. Powerfully in us. Terribly in us.

Wretchedly in us. And we do know it. By our new birth.

By our union with Christ inwardly. By this that has happened through a last Adam coming. And our faith in him.

By that, the thing, the thing that has got to be true of us is that as we have known and known the strength and power and reality of the old Adam in us, we have to know the reality of this last Adam in us. The reality

of Christ in us as the hope of glory has got to become more and more real and true in our case. Christ is the solution to all our problems.

The answer to all questions. What is the answer to the great problem of Christian disunity? What is it? Disunity amongst the Lord's people. And it's a big problem, you know.

Isn't it? It's a terrible problem. There seems to be no end to this thing. It's the old Adam busy.

The old devil through the old Adam busy. And I challenge you on this. That in every instance, in every case of division amongst the Lord's people, you'll be able to trace the old Adam somewhere.

That's the cause. If you could see it, you'd find it's there. It's there.

Somewhere this old man has got him. Either in his assertivenesses or his ambitions or his determinations or anything. He's in it.

That's where it comes from, these divisions. What is the answer to Christian divisions? Not conferences, discussions. It's Christ.

It's Christ and it's only Christ. There'll be no healing only in so far as there is an increase of Christ. But if there is an increase of Christ, we've got the key to the situation.

Christ is not divided, Paul says. Or he says, is Christ divided? Is Christ divided? Meaning, impossible, impossible. Christ cannot be divided.

Therefore, if there is a large measure of Christ, you'll have unity. Terrible to think, is it not, that this unity simply means such a small measure of Christ after all. Oh, terrible thought.

And yet it is. And as it is true of a matter like that, it's true of all other things, all other things. Christ is the answer.

More of Christ, more problems are solved. More of Christ, more difficulties are got over. More of Christ, and you getting nearer to that where the earth shall be full of the glory of the Lord.

Christ in you is the hope of that glory. This is a rebuke to us, and yet it's a great call to us. You see, this letter is founded on this.

Christ. Christ. More of Christ.

More of Christ. What are you praying for mostly? What are you concerned about mostly? Perhaps you're praying the Lord will use you to lead souls to himself, for the salvation of souls. Perhaps that's the thing you're praying about.

Well, I don't say pray less about that. Pray more about that if you can. It may be something else you're praying for, but let me tell you this.

The thing, the thing above all these other things to pray for is that we may be more like Christ. There shall be more of Christ in us. You see, God speaks to the world in a person.

It's not firstly in words. It's in a person. If only he could get this one new man conformed to his son.

What a tremendous impact he would make upon this world. If we were more Christ-like, we would have to say less. The testimony would be far more powerful.

Well, that's the sort of talk that we're used to, but there it is, dear friend. I can only say to you, this is what is borne in upon me tremendously. That the Lord would call his people, call us his people, to look again at his son.

See how great his son is. Get a new conception of the greatness of Christ. And then say to our own hearts, there is nothing, nothing that we could imagine of greater honor than to be joined to that son.

Fellow member of Christ. A partner with him in the heavenly calling. When I consider thy heavens, the works of thy hand, sun, star, thou hast created.

We, my wife and I, went to the London Planetarium recently. And were shown in this marvelous way the constellation. Just shrivel and become so small in your own eyes as you view it.

Contemplate that heavenly body. David the psalmist stepped out one night under that heaven as he was looking after his sheep. When I consider thy heavens, the works of thy hand, what is man that thou art mindful of him? The son of man that thou makest mention of him.

How do you interpret that? Do you interpret that as meaning this? This is so vast and man is so insignificant in this universe. Here is the greatness of God. And man, well God made man, but man is so insignificant.

Is that how you look at it? David's thought was just the opposite. Vastness of God's power and wisdom. In the universe it was put man right at the center of it, as the most important, most important part of his creation.

What is man? What is man? That he should be in God's mind more important than the words, more important than everything. He is the key to everything. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of God.

Thou hast put all things under his feet. It's not a putting man down in a smaller place in God's universe. It's putting man in the highest place.

And God's thought you see is realized in his son. And all the suns and all the moons and all the stars must worship him. And he again bringeth into the world his son, his only begotten.

What does that refer to? The coming again of the Lord. No doubt about it. The coming again of the Lord, he will say that all the angels of how it will be.

The book of the Revelation shows you that. Actually happening. But see, it's the son of man in that position.

Son of man. And that's a term, that's a designation that brings him in relation to mankind. Mankind.

Oh what a calling it's too big for us, too wonderful. But dear friends, don't you think we need to get a bigger idea. Both of Christ and of what it means to be a Christian.

Well read again this letter to the Hebrews in the light of that. You see how tremendous, tremendous it bears down upon us. Don't miss your calling.

Don't be careless about this great calling, this on high calling. This heavenly calling. Let us go on is the great note of this letter.

Let us go on. Let us go on to truth. We leave it there for the time being.

We pray. Work upon thy word. Give to our hearts the due impression that thou dost want us to have.

We pray that the words, the language, the efforts to convey truth may not in any way hide the truth itself. Bring that to our hearts that it is no small thing to be called to be fellow heirs with thy son. Heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ.

He put all things under his feet. Gave him to be head over all things. He appointed him heir of all things.

Fellow heir with Jesus Christ. What a calling. What a calling.

The Lord bring the weight of this to bear upon us. To move us to a new outreach. A new abandonment.

A new readiness. To suffer the loss of all things to gain Christ. Cover thy word.

If anything has been said that should not have been said, just let it die. May it have no power with us. But what has been true according to thyself, confirm it, strengthen it, hold it, preserve it.

Be with us now, cover us in our going. May we be blessed of the Lord with his peace this night. For the sake of our Lord Jesus we ask it.

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