

# The Heavenly Calling - Part 7

by T. Austin-Sparks

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*The sermon explores the transition from earthly to heavenly Israel, emphasizing God's glory and the significance of sonship in our spiritual journey.*

**Duration:** 44:48

**Scripture:** Genesis 12:1, Exodus 4:22, Matthew 6:33, Acts 7:2, Hebrews 3:1, Hebrews 3:14

**Topics:** "Heavenly Calling"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the concept of the nation of Israel and how it relates to believers in Christ. He emphasizes that God sees the nation as one son and will not surrender any part of it. The speaker also highlights the importance of recognizing God's intervention in our lives and how it marks a turning point in our personal history. He encourages listeners to bring the message of God's intervention into their own lives and to understand that they are called to be companions of Christ in a heavenly calling.

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## Transcript

Hebrews chapter 3, verses 1 and 14, only by way of refreshing your memory, not by way of insulting it, were for holy brethren, partakers or companions of a heavenly calling, we are become companions of Christ if we hold fast the beginning firm unto the end. Companions of Christ and of a heavenly calling. And we are seeing that this letter to the Hebrews embodies the whole of the character of the dispensation in which we live.

It is the change from the old earthly Israel to the new heavenly Israel. I am sorry for those friends who have only been able to join us today, but I am more sorry for myself than for you. We are today exactly half way through this conference, which means that a great deal has already been said.

It is quite impossible for me to gather you into what is being said by going over all the ground cover. I trust that the Lord will help you to fall right into the course that he is taking. So we go on with a further fragment of this matter of the new Israel as the companions of Christ in a heavenly calling.

This morning we are going back to the beginning of this history, because we have been seeing that God is following in a spiritual way the line that he took the first Israel. He took a certain line with Israel in an earthly way. He is taking that same line with the new heavenly Israel, but in a spiritual way.

It would be a very wonderful thing if we were to spend some time in seeing God's line right from the beginning up to Christ. There were many generations which came to an end. In one place there is a large summary of what came and what finished.

It says so and so lived, and he lived for so long, and then it says and he died. And that is said about a long list of people. They live and then they die.

But right through there is one line that lived and never died. It is the line moving straight through history right up to Christ. And you can clearly follow that line.

Now at a certain point in that movement of God we find ourselves in the presence of God's beginning with Israel. It has now moved from individuals to the point where the nation comes into view. So far it has been individuals.

It has been Abel and Enoch and Noah and all those antediluvians. But when it comes to Abraham it comes to the point where a nation comes. It is Israel, the Israel of history.

That is the Israel of this hour. And this morning we are going to note the beginning and how God began with Israel. And how the principle of that beginning is transferred to the new heavenly Israel in Christ.

And it is very impressive that you have the beginning of the first Israel in the New Testament. And you have it in the book of the Acts. Now note that is a significant thing.

Because the book of the Acts is the link between the old and the new. The focal point of the transition from the one to the other is in the book of the Acts. And interestingly enough it is in the discourse of the martyr Stephen.

The old Israel killed Stephen. And out of the death of Stephen sprang the new Israel. And the first thing that Stephen said to the old Israel was this.

Chapter 7 of the book of Acts and verse 2. The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham when he was in Er of the Chaldees. The God of glory appeared. That was the first movement to the old Israel.

And that is exactly the first movement to the new Israel. It is the appearing of the God of glory. We are seeing in the New Testament this beginning.

Turn again to the gospel by John. In the beginning was the word. And the word was made flesh and tabernacled among us.

Now note. And we beheld his glory. Turn again to this letter to the Hebrews.

Chapter 1. God hath at the end of these times spoken unto us in his son who is the effulgence of his glory. The God of glory appeared. Hath spoken to us at the end of these times in his son who is the effulgence of his glory.

First of all then it is God breaking into human history. That is how it was with the first Israel. Away there in Er of the Chaldees.

A pagan country. With two thousand other gods. The God of glory broke in.

And changed the course of history. Took his first step toward the securing of Israel. The first chapter of John is God in glory breaking into human history in a new way.

Now that of course is in the Bible. The Old Testament and in the New Testament. And you may mentally put it out there.

And view it in an objective way. But you must just take hold of that and bring it right into this room. And bring it into these rows of people.

And let it come right on you personally. Because this relates to you and to me personally. It is you and it is me.

Called by God to be the companions of Christ in a heavenly calling. This belongs to all of us. The very beginning of our history as God heavenly Israel.

Is the intervention of God in our lives. Perhaps to some of us it was just as unexpected as it was to Abram in Er of the Chaldees. We were living our lives in this world.

We were mixed up in the course of this world. The God of this world ruled our lives. Where there we were just one in a great crowd.

And then God broke into our lives. And when God breaks into a life there is no doubt about it. That the turning point in history.

In our history. And the nature of the changes that we no longer belong to this world. We have become members of a new Israel.

In other words of a heavenly people. With a spiritual nature. It may not have been just with us just as it was with Abram.

But it is essential for every one of us to know that God has entered into our human history. It was not something in the first place from our side. It was something from God's side.

He took the initiative. Perhaps in some wonderful way. Or in some very simple way.

It may belong to a moment in time. Or it may belong to days, weeks and months. But the fact is that God came in where we were.

How did God come in? And how has he come in? How should we put it if we wanted to put it into words? Well it says here about the old Israel the God of glory appears. Could you put it like that as to your experience? Well you see these words here in the New Testament explain that. God came in Jesus Christ.

And in Jesus Christ is the glory of God. And as we have seen Jesus Christ we have come into touch with the God of glory. In these words of Hebrews 1 God has spoken to us in his son.

And all those who know that Jesus Christ has come into their lives really do know that the God of glory has come in. And so after saying that the word became flesh and dwelt among us God says and we beheld his glory. Glory as of an only begotten of the Father.

And what is the glory? Full of grace and truth. You notice in the New Testament grace and glory always go together. If you want to know what the glory of God is it is the grace of God.

If you want to know what the grace of God is it is the glory of God. It is the glory of God to be gracious. God glories in being gracious.

And when you know the grace of God then you know the glory of God. The glory of God will always come to us along the line of grace. And so because of grace we shall be able to say and we beheld his glory.

Now perhaps you know that that word glory is one of the big words in John's gospel. If you have never done so I advise you to go through that gospel and underline the word glory. Now just a little word with the young Christians who haven't done a lot of Bible study yet.

I hadn't thought of saying this but perhaps it will be helpful. I do not profess to know a great deal about the Bible. Indeed I know very little of the Bible.

But I tell you how I started to study the Bible. I bought a box of colored pencils. And I bought a new Bible.

And I came first of all to the gospel by John. And I gave a certain color to the same word through the gospel. Of course I put green always where the word life is found.

That's the color for life. See it all around. Green speaks of life.

I put blue wherever the word glory is. That's the color for heaven. I put red wherever the blood is.

Or anything to do with the blood of the cross. And so I went on. I had a wonderful result in the gospel of John when I was finished.

And to this day if I want to say something about life why it's all there in green. Now that's only a suggestion and I think you might find it a very simple help. There are a lot more colors than those three.

Now I'm speaking about glory. Glory is one of John's great words. And all the references in John to Christ's glory are related to his supernatural person.

And his supernatural power. When John said we beheld his glory he was writing many many years after the Lord Jesus had come and gone. John's gospel is one of the oldest of the New Testament writings.

Probably all the other apostles had gone to the Lord when John wrote his gospel. And so John was looking back over all that history. And he was putting into certain words the impressions.

And as he thought of the Lord Jesus. His life. His work.

His teaching. And everything else about him. He summed it all up in this.

And we beheld his glory. How did he behold his glory? He beheld his glory on many occasions. He beheld his glory by a whole series of humanly impossible situations.

Now there's another line of study for you. Go to the gospel of John and see how many impossible situations you can find. All that gospel is just full of impossible situations.

Think about the marriage in Cana of Galilee. When the wine fails. It's a humanly impossible situation.

Go into your next chapter with Nicodemus. And what is it that Nicodemus is saying? How can a man be born again when he is old? An impossible situation. Think of the woman of Samaria.

She had tried everything to find satisfaction. An impossible situation. You see you can go right on like this.

And in all these situations Jesus came in and turned the impossible into actuality. And so it says at the end of the account of the marriage in Cana. These first miracles did Jesus in Cana and showed for his glory.

And that was the principle governing everything. He does not always say that in exact words. But if you went back with that woman of Samaria into the city.

And heard her shouting to all the people in the city. Come behold a man. Is not this the Christ? You would conclude that she had beheld his glory.

So you go right on to Lazarus. Lazarus said Jesus this sickness is not unto death but for the glory of God. That the son of God may be glorified.

And in the difficulty being faced by those sisters in Bethany. And in the difficulty being faced by those sisters in Bethany. It was the supernatural person and power of the son of God.

That was the glory of God. And dear friends that is why sometimes we have such a difficulty in getting through. And dear friends that is why sometimes we have such a difficulty in getting through.

Perhaps you have often been troubled because of the difficulty that some soul has in getting through to the Lord. Perhaps you have often been troubled because of the difficulty that some soul has in getting through to the Lord. They go through difficulties sometimes for days, weeks, or months.

And you know all the time they are arguing, they are bringing up their problems. Nothing seems to happen. Until at last it does happen.

and they come through. Why is that? God is saying emphatically this thing is going to be of me and not of yourself. No man or woman can save himself or herself.

With all the good will of other people to help, they cannot save. The salvation of a soul is an impossible thing but for God. And God speaks to it that it is put upon the supernatural basis.

And very often he does not come in until we have come to the point of despair. But he does come in then. And what is true about salvation is so often true about our spiritual history.

Again and again we are brought to the point where situations are quite impossible where man is concerned. We cannot solve that problem ourselves. We cannot change the situation ourselves.

If it were that we were only people of this world we might be able to do it. But somehow or other because we are the Lord's people it just doesn't work. All our cleverness fails.

Naturally there is no reason why we should not get on. But the fact is we just do not. We try everything.

We are greatly perplexed. We are being brought more and more to despair. And we are being brought to the point where we say well only the Lord can do this.

And that is exactly what the Lord has been working for. When the God of glory appears he appears as the God of glory. You see the point? Well I said that the word glory in John's gospel is connected with the supernatural power of Jesus Christ.

And we only learn who Jesus is by coming up against situations in which he only can help us. The more we are going to learn about the Lord Jesus the more impossible will life be here on this earth. And the more impossible will situations become.

Well that's the beginning of the God of glory. The next thing, God's glory in Abraham reached its climax in sonship. There were many things in the life of Abraham which needed the God of glory to come in.

So we read that in different situations the Lord appeared unto Abraham. But the climax of all God's appearances to Abraham was in connection with Isaac. That is it was bound up with this matter of sonship.

The covenant of God with Abraham was going to be realized along the line of sonship. All God's purposes in Abraham were bound up with Isaac. Because at the beginning Isaac was an impossibility.

But at the end he was still greater impossibility. Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, and offer him a sacrifice. Here is all the promise and the covenant wrapped up in Isaac to be slain with a knife.

This is an impossible situation. Isaac could die? No possibility of another Isaac. Indeed I doubt whether Abraham would have wanted another Isaac.

It was a matter of life or death to him. Quite impossible situation if Isaac lies dead on the altar. But you know what happened.

And you know what the New Testament says about that. It says he received him back as by a resurrection. Has ever anybody raised someone from the dead but God? Men can do a great deal in prolonging life.

They think they're going to reach the time when they will raise the dead. Well we haven't reached that time yet. And we shall see whether God will surrender his own one prerogative.

That is to bring back a departed spirit into a dead body. That is God's act. That is resurrection not resuscitation.

I was saying that the glory of God reached its climax in Abram's case along the line of sonship. Later on we shall have to look at this more closely in connection with Lazarus. But let us come back to our beginning.

John 1 again We beheld his glory. How do we behold his glory? He came unto his own. And they that were his own would not receive him.

But to as many as did receive him, to them gave he the right to be sons of God. He gave the authority to be sons. That's our history.

We hear this morning, I John analyzes this. Which were born not of the will of the flesh, not of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God. Children of God by the intervention of God.

By a direct act of God, born from above, made children of God. The glory of God revealed in Jesus Christ in sonship. Are you glorying in the fact that you are a born again child of God? This same John, all those years afterwards, with a very full heart, wrote these words.

Beloved, now are we the children of God. And it does not yet appear what we shall be. But when the children are full grown, we know that we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

And connected with that, John says, Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called sons of God. Oh, it's a wonderful thing to be a child of God. Anyway, John said so.

And he knew what he was talking about. The glory then is in sonship. And I think I'm going to leave it there for this morning.

Perhaps if I say much more, you'll forget what I have said. But it is just at that point, you see, that the Israel comes into view. Abraham's seed through Isaac.

It's the nation that is coming into view now. And as we have said before, God said to Pharaoh, Let my son go. And that word son was a comprehensive word.

It embodied the whole nation. God saw that nation as one son. And he would not surrender one fragment of that, because sonship is such a complete thing.

Pharaoh said, Well, just let the men go. Leave the women and the children. And leave your flocks and herds.

And Moses said, Not one single hoop of one single cow shall stay behind. God had said, My son. And that included the nation.

Oh, how I'd like to go over to the New Testament with that. But we can leave that until tomorrow.

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