

Hebrews 1

Last time we began studying the book of Hebrews. And we didn't really get into the text of Hebrews much, we just talked about a lot of background to help give you an understanding of the perspective that the book of Hebrews is coming from. It is written to people who are steeped in a knowledge of the OT scripture, and who were zealous toward God, but not according to knowledge. People that came from that background into the NT understanding of Christ, but still haven't quite comprehended it fully. Still haven't quite figured out how the NT affects some of the concepts that they know from the OT. And specifically the book of Hebrews deals with those two most fundamental concepts of scripture, the kingdom and the priesthood. And it is going to inform the Hebrews in how they should relate to those things, now that Christ has come. And so this book is a lot different from Paul's other epistles, because those other epistles were written to the Gentile churches. The book of Hebrews is written to the God-fearing, Messianic Hebrews of the first century. To give them full knowledge of how the Messiah has and will perfect the promises made to their fathers, how he will perfect the kingdom and the priesthood. And how they should be relating to those things now, based on the stage that they are now in.

Last time as we ended we pointed out how the first few verses of Hebrews form a kind of summary of the book. And that's what we're going to be looking at today. We're going to go over the first few verses, and you're going to get a real glimpse into the subject matter that the book of Hebrews is going to be about. This is the stuff that Paul is going to be expounding on in the rest of the book.

Verse 1

OK so let's look in depth at verse one. And really we can't look at verse one without verse two as well, because they are all one sentence, and there is one thought that is split in half across these two verses. So we have to look at that as all one piece.

I teach verse by verse, and that is how I'm going to be teaching this study on the book of Hebrews, we're going to go verse by verse, and word by word. But I would point out that just because you are studying verse by verse doesn't mean you ignore the surrounding verses. You need them for context, you absolutely have to take them into account. And in this case, that's certainly apparent, because to finish the sentence we have to look in the next verse.

OK so it says: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son."

So that is the portion that we're going to focus on right now. We're going to look at it point by point.

And the subject of these two verses, is God speaking. That's what they are about. They're about how God speaks to man.

SUNDRY TIMES

Now the first thing that it says is that God has spoken "at sundry times."

So Paul doesn't take the opportunity here to go through a bullet list of all of the different prophets, all of the different times that God spoke to them. He's just summarizing the history of God's work.

But he still points out that that work was “at sundry times.” I mean, he could have just started out, “God hath spoken unto us in these last days by his Son.” He could of just bypassed the whole thing.

But remember who he’s writing to. People who are coming from the OT perspective. He probably wouldn’t have bothered to mention that if he was writing this book to a Gentile church. But he points it out here, because this is where his audience is coming from. So he meets them where they are at. He begins from that mindset. He can just summarize this just this briefly, and it brings a whole wealth of OT knowledge to the forefront of their minds.

So that is one reason why this begins the way it does, with the first verse being about the OT. But there is also another aspect here that we don’t want to miss.

By saying that it was at sundry times that God spoke to them, he is pointing out that there wasn’t a set time. There was no pattern. God didn’t speak to them every year, or anything like that. It was just at sundry times. Whenever God chose.

And so this OT ministry of the prophets, was a sporadic ministry, it was just at sundry times. And it wasn’t a ministry that ever came to a head, that was ever terminated because God had said everything that ever needed to be said, and that was the last word. The ministry of the prophets never culminated, it was just at sundry times, it continued, there was no finality to it. When one prophet prophesies, that doesn’t mean that there’s never going to be another one. It has no bearing on when another prophet might prophesy. It just happened at sundry times. That’s just the nature of the prophets, it’s just whenever God decides to send one, and then whenever he decides to send the next one.

And so Paul is pointing this out, saying it this way, not just to avoid going through the whole long list, but because he also wants to emphasize the nature of the prophetic ministry. Because he wants to contrast that with the ministry of Christ, that these next verses are going to declare. You see, the prophets were just at sundry times. There was no finality to it. But now, God has spoken by his Son.

And the implications are pretty obvious.

And that isn’t a very challenging statement to most of us today, but to an Hebrew, even after having believed on Christ, it was still something that had to grow on them. Remember, they have a deep heritage that is ingrained in them, to reverence the prophets, to reverence that God spoke to their forefathers and called them out. And now they have to realize that that was an imperfect ministry, that it wasn’t the ultimate thing, that there is something better, that there is something more perfect, something even greater.

That would take some getting used to for many of them.

And so yes, this would challenge, to some degree, even the born-again Hebrew.

And it will also shake up other people today, who are zealous toward God, but don’t really know Christ, don’t understand who he is and what he means.

Think about the muslim man, whose most revered figure in his religion is the prophet Mohammad. And here we are saying that the ministry of the prophets is just a sporadic work of God, at sundry times, it isn’t the final, culminating thing. Well that challenges him to his very core.

And so last time I mentioned a muslim man who read these verses, and decided that Mohammad couldn’t save him. That he needed to believe the word of the Son, over the word of any prophet.

And any Mormon is in a similar situation as a muslim. Are you going to believe your prophet, or are you going to believe the Son?

And so you see, this is why religions like Islam have to teach that Jesus is only a prophet. He's just one among many. They're tacitly admitting the thing that Paul is pointing out here: that no prophet's ministry is the final word. But when the Son of God himself speaks, that's not at sundry times. That's once. That's the final word. No more to be said.

So while we're on this subject, let me talk a little bit about the perfection of the canon, that the Bible is complete, there's no new revelation to be added to it. Because you see Jesus actually explained during his walk on this earth how this ministry of the word of God through him, in the NT, would unfold. And he told us exactly how it would end. On the night before Jesus was crucified he said this to his disciples:

John 16:12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

And so Jesus told his disciples that he had more things to tell them, but that he wouldn't give them those words in person. That instead the Holy Spirit would be poured out upon them after Christ's ascension, and he would guide the apostles into all the truth that remained to be declared.

And it would be through the apostles, through the disciples of Christ, that the remaining word would be given to mankind.

And then he said finally, after all that, that the Spirit would also show them things to come.

And so that's exactly what happened. The Spirit gave the gospels and the Acts and the epistles, all of the scripture that was to be given, through the apostles. And then finally, they were shown things to come. Jesus Christ himself sent his angel to give them the revelation that God had given him of all things to come.

And so with the giving of the book of Revelation, the word of God was completed, just as Christ said it would be.

And so there truly are no more prophets, after the Son. They all came before him. John the Baptist was the last one. Jesus said:

Luke 7:28 For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women **there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist**: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

And so later he said:

Luke 16:16 The law and **the prophets were until John**: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.

And so all of the prophets are in the OT. They *were*, until John. But in the NT every word given, is given by the Son. And he closed it with the Revelation.

And so "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son."

That's the final, ultimate, culminating word from God.

DIVERSE MANNERS

So in the past God has spoken at sundry times, and he's also spoken in diverse manners.

So Paul calls attention to the fact that God communicated his word to the prophets in many different ways.

When God spoke to Moses, the Angel of God himself spoke to him in the burning bush, and in the pillar of fire.

But many times God would speak to a prophet through a dream, or through a vision that they would have, they'd go into a trance. Or an angel might be sent to speak to them. Or the Spirit of God might just come on them and they'd prophesy.

And so there were different ways that God spoke his word through the prophets.

And the point is again that this was a varied ministry. God might do it this way, and he might do it that way. He might do it at this time, and he might do it at that time. You never know when the prophets were going to speak, or how God was going to give his word to them.

But now, God has spoken to us in a completely new way that he has never used to speak to mankind before. Now God has spoken to us, not by prophets, but by his Son.

What God had to say now, he had all of those different ways that he could have said it through prophets, but he didn't, he said it through his Son.

And so again, Paul is pointing out how the ministry of the word of God through Christ is superior to the ministry of the prophets. Not that it is any more the word of God than what the prophets said was. But obviously if God had to send his Son to say it, then it must be extra important.

I mean, everything else that God ever said, he said it one way or another by one prophet or another. But now he decided that what he was about to say, none of those ways was good enough. He was going to send his Son to earth to perform a multifaceted ministry, and one part of that was going to be that he, the Son, was going to declare the word of God straight to mankind.

So what God said through the Son is obviously something very, very special. And so we have to make sure that we pay attention to that.

What Paul is saying to the Hebrews is, "OK, you've got this great rich heritage of prophets, all of the scriptures that God has inspired the prophets to write. But now God has sent the Son to culminate that, to bring it to perfection, to fill in the final word."

So Paul is not telling them to cast aside the OT prophets here. In fact, as I said, he is going to quote the OT more frequently than any other NT book. But he is establishing a foundation for what he is about to say, that now, on top of that, we have a new word from God, that comes from an extra special source, that we need to take extra special heed to.

He is taking his readers from that OT perspective, and motivating them to want to come to a knowledge of the NT perspective. Because clearly there must be something very important that God wanted them hear.

TIME PAST

And so it says that God spoke in time past by the prophets, but now he has spoken by his Son. And again, by saying "in time past," Paul is implying that the ministry of the prophets, in speaking to declare new revelation, new scripture to mankind, that that ministry of the prophets is over. It is a thing of the past. It is the way that God spoke to them then. But now he has used a new way, and he doesn't need to use that old way any more.

UNTO THE FATHERS

That's how he spoke in time past, "unto the fathers." He spoke unto the fathers by the prophets, but now he's spoken by his Son.

And by mentioning the fathers here, Paul is pointing out that the fathers were spoken to by prophets, he's acknowledging that. The forefathers of the Hebrews, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the other patriarchs, they did receive the word of God, sent to them by prophets.

And I think that what God would have us draw the reader's attention to here, what Paul might have said if he'd had the opportunity to expound on this summary, is that what the fathers were receiving was a progressive revelation of the will of God.

They received a word from God by a prophet, and they believed it, and then they received another word from God by another prophet, and they believed it. It was something that was not complete, not final, as we said before. But each new prophecy, each new scripture that they received, they added it to the canon and believed it.

And that is what Paul is encouraging them to do now. To follow in the footsteps of the fathers. Because they, like the fathers, have received this new word from God, in addition to what they already have. The only difference is, in this case the new word doesn't come from just any old prophet, but from the ultimate source, the Son of God himself.

And so as Hebrews, this is actually their heritage. It is easy for them to think that their heritage is set in stone, that it is all about the past, that it is all about what their fathers' received from God. There had been hundreds of years of silence, after all. But really, their heritage is, that God continued to give them new revelation of his will, and the nation received it (eventually), and believed it, and lived by it, and was preserved by it. And that is what it means for them to be Hebrews, to be God's people. Not just that their fathers answered God's call, but that they, as a nation, as a people, have continued to answer God's call, as he spoke to them through the prophets.

And so they need to continue to do that now. To continue to follow the example of the fathers, and fulfill their heritage, by receiving the word that God is now sending to call them by his Son.

SUMMARY OF VERSE 1

So in this first verse Paul has begun laying out the reasons why they should be interested in what he has to say to them in this book. He's persuading them to take earnest heed to the knowledge given to us by God in the NT, so that they can inform their zeal of God with that. And so what he's done here is meet them right where they are, with their OT perspective, and give them the motivation to explore how the NT relates to that. To understand how the words of the prophets have been perfected by the word of the Son.

Verse 2

Hebrews 1:1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

So now that Paul has summarized the basic ministry of God's word up to this point, he is going to state the existence of this novel ministry, that is now through the Son. And being through the Son, we can tell right off that that is important, that that adds extra weight to whatever God wanted to say by him. But what Paul is going to do is briefly summarize for us, just so that we don't miss it, why it is so significant. And as he does that he is going to specifically relate it to these two things, that the Hebrews are so attached to, and that really do form the heart of Christ's ministry: the kingdom and the priesthood.

And so here are some reasons why the word spoken by the Son is so important: “God... hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.”

So there are two things, that he lists right up front, right in this verse, all as part of that one thought that these two verses come together to make. All one sentence.

And so these are the two vital things, the two foremost things, about the Son, that are significant here. These are the two things that really set the Son, and thus the word of the Son, apart from the prophets.

WHOM HE HATH APPOINTED HEIR OF ALL THINGS

First, God has appointed him heir of all things.

Now, first let me just point out that that is a direct reference to the kingdom. You can't get much more “kingdom” than that. Inheriting all things, they're under your dominion. That's kingdom talk. But before we can really understand what he is saying here, and why it is significant, we need to first deal with this issue of him being appointed.

When we see this verse, coming from the NT perspective, we have a difficult time understanding that. That seems really strange to us. I mean, we think, “Why would Jesus have to be appointed heir of all things, isn't the Son of God the heir of all things already?”

And the answer is no. And I realize that this is a shock to your NT mind. But you've got to understand this, because this phrase can be even more shocking to a Hebrew, and for the opposite reason.

So, no, the Son is not naturally, by natural right, the heir of all things. Just because he is the Son of God does not make him the heir of all things. Because God is not the possessor of all things. I know it is shocking to you. But God does not have dominion over all things. The kingdom of heaven does not belong to God the Father.

Am I blowing your mind?

The earth has never really been a part of God's dominion. People really get messed up in their view of God because they don't understand his relationship to earth. His relationship to man. People get really mixed up on theology when they don't understand the difference between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven.

Hebrews understood this in a way that it was probably difficult for some of them to imagine the two ever coming together in this way. And that is why what Paul is saying here about the Son being appointed the heir of all things is so profound to them.

But you see, they understood, from actually reading the OT scripture, that God did not have dominion over all things. That God did not have dominion over earth.

You say, “Would you please explain that, because that is really making me feel uncomfortable.”

OK. When God created the world what did he say?

Genesis 1:26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: **and let them have dominion** over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, **and over all the earth...**

So when God created the world, he gave man dominion over all the earth. And so it no longer belonged to God. He gave it to us. He gave it to man. He appointed man over the earth.

And so the Son of God, as God's heir, he could be heir to everything else. God could give him the sun, he could give him the moon, all the planets, all the stars, all the galaxies, and heaven itself. But he could not be heir of *all* things. He could not be heir of planet earth. That belonged exclusively to man.

And then later, God found Abraham. And God established a covenant with Abraham, that he was going to inherit the promised land. He and his seed. And so the Son of God could inherit everything else, but the promised land belonged to Abraham and his seed forever. The Son could not be the heir of all things.

And finally God found David, the man after his own heart. And God gave the kingdom of Israel, the throne of Israel, to him and his seed forever. That was his seed's inheritance. And so the Son of God could not inherit that. He could inherit anything else, but the throne of Israel belonged to the seed of David.

And so the Son could not be the heir of all things. He could not inherit earth, he could not inherit the promised land, he could not inherit the throne of Israel, that was outside of his reach, that was off limits, the Father had given it to man.

Now, I know some of you are still thinking, "But, but, the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof!" And that's true. The earth is the Lord's, that's how come he could give the promised land to Abraham. Because it belonged to him.

But you see, how that happened is that when God made man, he gave the earth to him. But when man sinned and rebelled against God, he defaulted on that dominion. He was no longer worthy of that dominion, of that title. And so it defaulted back to God.

But God's response was not to say, "I'm going to kick man out of the inheritance, and appoint my Son to be heir of all things, I'll just give the earth to *him* instead." You'll notice that in the Bible despite man's disobedience God never goes back on his promises. His will is still done as he originally said it would be. And so God didn't make the Son the heir. Instead, God's response was to allow man to continue to live on the earth, with the ultimate purpose of restoring dominion to man. As soon as he found a man who was worthy.

And so eventually God found Abraham, and he gave him that promise that his seed would be the heir of the world.

And so what had once been the dominion, the inheritance, of all mankind, became the dominion of the Hebrews, the seed of Abraham, whom God called out of his country to give him a promised land.

And so God still ultimately bequeathed the earth to man. Not to his Son.

And so the Son of God, naturally, has no right, whatsoever, to be heir of all things. He has no right to inherit the earth. Everything else the Father could give him, but not that, not all things. So he had to be appointed heir of all things.

And so how did that happen? How did the Son get appointed the heir of all things, if God gave that to Abraham, if God gave that to David, if God gave that to Adam, then how did the Son get it? Did God go back on his promise?

Now there you go. Now you've the OT thinking cap on. Now you understand how the zealous Hebrew would respond to this. "How did he get to be the heir? As a Hebrew, a son of Abraham, isn't that my inheritance?"

And so they have a right to be indignant. It does seem like God finally went back on his promises to Adam, to David, to Abraham, didn't he?

No. God just got to pick who was worthy, among the sons of Adam, among the seed of Abraham, among the sons of David, to receive that promise. And he appointed that One that was worthy to be heir of all things.

You see, the Son of God is only the heir to all things because he came down to earth and became Jesus Christ the Son of Man, the Son of David, the the Son of Abraham. It is only as the seed of Abraham, as the seed of David, as the seed of Adam, that the Son became a

potential heir of earth, of the throne, of the promised land. And it was only then that God could appoint him to inherit it.

And he did appoint him to inherit it, to inherit all things, because he was the only one among the seed of Adam, among the seed of Abraham, among the seed of David, that was worthy.

In the book of Matthew Jesus tells a parable to his disciples that is very relevant here.

In Matthew 13:44. It is one of those one-verse parables. Just a short one.

Matthew 13:44 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

Now, we don't have to guess what the different things in this parable represent. Jesus had just expounded a parable that talked about a field. The parable of the tares and the wheat. And the disciples asked him to expound that parable. And so in Matthew 13:38 he tells them, "The field is the world." And so in this parable of the treasure hid in the field, the field is world.

And the man in the parable, as in all of Jesus's parables, represents Christ. In all of his parables the man consistently represents God, either Christ or the Father. And in this case it is Christ.

So Christ found this treasure that was hidden in the world. And when he found it, he sold everything he had, and bought the world.

So what is the treasure? Well, he told us that at the start of the parable: "the *kingdom of heaven* is like unto treasure hid in a field." So he is talking about the kingdom of heaven. And that is a physical kingdom, the kingdom of David and Solomon, on the throne of Israel.

Psalms 135:4 For the LORD hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his *peculiar treasure*.

So the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of Israel, was a treasure. And it was hidden. A lot of people would probably say that the kingdom of Israel didn't seem like it was such a great kingdom, it is just this little tiny slice of wilderness. It was oppressed, it didn't have dominion over anything, it wasn't ruling the world. But you see, it was a *hidden* treasure.

And the Son of God could see that. And you know, the major religions of the world actually acknowledge that. Catholics, Muslims, Orthodox, and of course the Jews, they all view Zion, and the land of Israel, as a treasure. They have fought countless wars over it, crusades, spilling much blood, and taking countless lives, to try to get control of that treasure.

And in the end, you know who is going to get it? None of them. None of them are going to get it, because the Son has already beat them to it.

Because the Son of God could see that the kingdom of heaven was a hidden treasure. And he sold everything that he had, all that inheritance that included everything except the promised land and the throne of David, everything but the kingdom of heaven, and he left that inheritance, and bought the treasure. And bought not just the treasure, but the field that the treasure was in. Bought the whole world.

Because you see it was a package deal. In a very real sense, the Son did not purchase the world for its own sake. He was after the promised land, after Israel, after the treasure. And the other nations weren't really that important. The rest of the world didn't matter so much. But it was a package deal. The treasure wasn't for sale on its own. It was hidden in the field. And so he had to buy the whole field to get the treasure. And so he did.

I'll let that ruminates in your Gentile-minded, NT-minded skull for a little while. Kind of uncomfortable isn't it? It makes it sound like God is treating Israel special, or something. But you see, God does treat the nation of Israel special. He does view the kingdom of Israel as special. It is a lone treasure among the kingdoms of the earth.

And so, as it will hint at later in Hebrews, the Son bought the field, so that he could dig up the treasure, and make it a part of his eternal inheritance. And the rest of the field will be burnt up and destroyed. All the other nations and kingdoms, the whole rest of the world, will be discarded. Only that treasure will last.

And so the Son of God thought so much of that treasure, that he sold everything that he had, that whole inheritance that included everything but earth, and bought the world.

And so Jesus traded the universe, so that he could get the earth. Traded heaven, so that he could get the promised land. Traded the throne of God, so that he could get the throne of David.

He left all of that, so that he could come to earth, and buy it, and become the heir of all things. He had to become a man, had to become a son of Abraham, had to become a son of David. Being the Son of God wouldn't cut it. And so it was only through that that he purchased the field, and the treasure, and became the one whom God could appoint heir of all things. He could then be the heir not only of heaven, but of earth as well.

And so God promised the kingdom to Abraham. To the Hebrews. That his seed would inherit the promised land, and become a great nation.

And so Abraham and his seed were appointed heir of the promised land, heir of that kingdom.

But the children of Abraham were like Adam. They were sinners. They rebelled against God.

They were unworthy to inherit the kingdom, the dominion.

And so God appointed it to them, but they came short of that glory. Even with the priesthood, covering their sins every year, God still had to bring judgment on them and cast them out. We'll find later how that was an imperfect priesthood. And so even with that priesthood interceding for them before God, they were still unworthy to receive the promise.

And so in all of history God found only one man, only one man, a child of Abraham, a son of David, who was worthy to receive that inheritance. Who did not rebel. Who did not sin.

It was his own Son who came to earth to purchase it unto himself.

And he was the only one that was worthy, and so he is the one that God appointed to be heir of the throne, heir of the promised land, heir of all things.

And so *who* has been appointed heir of all things? The Son. The One who has now spoken.

And the significance of that for the Hebrew is, that if the Son is going to inherit all things, then if you want to inherit something, if you want to receive some part of that inheritance, if you want to receive the promise made unto your fathers, then you've got to be on his good side. You've got to go through him. He's the only way to get it, because he is going to get everything. If what you want to inherit is a part of what he is inheriting, then in order to get that, you've got to be made a joint-heir with him somehow. You've got to convince him to let you partake in his inheritance, because he's going to be inheriting everything. If you don't get something through him, you get nothing.

And so you can see why it is so important for the Hebrews to listen up here. If they want to find out how to receive their promise, they need to pay attention to what the Son has to say.

Because he is the heir, he is the one who's inheriting it, he's the only one who can let them in, he's the only one who can tell them how to become a part of that.

And so that's huge. That really sets the Son apart from the prophets. The prophets were just messengers sent by God. They didn't control the kingdom, they didn't control the promise. But still, when Israel didn't listen to them, they got cast out of their inheritance.

Well how much more, when now, the One who is the heir of all things is speaking to them? They better pay attention.

And Paul is going to bring up the consequences of this several times later on, so we won't dwell on it more now, but you get a glimpse of how important the NT message is to the Hebrew. It is absolutely vital. Without the NT message, without understanding the word of the Son, there is no other way for the Hebrew to receive his promised inheritance. So this is their calling, but if they want it fulfilled, they better receive this knowledge that's been imparted by the Son, the heir of all things.

Now, there is so much more that we could go into here. We could just look at this concept of the heir and the inheritance, and follow it right through the Bible.

But we're not going to take the time to go into it in depth here, because after all, these verses are just supposed to summarize these things. So we shouldn't dwell on each point too long or we'll lose sight of bigger picture that Paul is trying to paint.

But there is an opportunity here for anybody who is interested in studying any of these points in more depth, to do so. You could take your concordance, or Bible software, and look up every verse that talks uses the terms heir and inheritance, and see what all the Bible has to say about this.

And maybe, since again this is a summary, we'll have the opportunity to look into a lot of this stuff in more depth later on, once we actually get into the heart of the book of Hebrews. We'll at least get to see some aspects of it, that Paul himself is going to expound for us from various OT passages.

But for now suffice it to say, that the Son is the one who is the heir of all things, something that the prophets never were. And so this is a reason why those who are hoping to receive that kingdom as their own inheritance need to take heed to what the Son had to say, because he's the one who is going to have the kingdom. If they want a part of it, they are going to have to be partakers with him. So they better listen up, and find out how to do that.

BY WHOM ALSO HE MADE THE WORLDS

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds."

And so the second thing that Paul lists, as one of the vital points of who the Son is, is that he is the one by whom God made the worlds. And so he is not only the heir of all things, but the Maker of all things to start with.

And so these two statements are kind of like bookends, they declare the Son as the first and the last, the heir and Creator.

And he lists them here in reverse order, chronologically speaking. First pointing out that the Son will inherit all things, and then pointing out that he is also the Maker of them.

And he does that, he points out that he is the Creator last, because he's going to expound that more in the next verse.

What he's basically done here is he's stated his conclusion right up front, what Christ is ultimately going to receive, what he is ultimately going to be. The heir of all things. Then he goes back to the beginning, explaining who the Son was from the start. And then also filling in what he has done in the mean time, finally bringing us back to where he started, with the fact that the

Son is the heir of this all-encompassing inheritance. That's what he's going to do in the next two verses.

So what is the significance of the fact that it is the Son by whom God made the worlds? How is that important in relation to the word that the Son has now spoken to mankind, the message from God that he has delivered?

Well, Paul is going to expound on that in the next verse. But in essence it's this: the word of the Son is not just special, because he is the heir. It is also special because of who he is, beside that, as well. It is special because of who he, as the Son, is in his very nature, and not just what he is going to receive.

Verse 3

And so verse three is Paul's description of the Son:

Hebrews 1:3 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 on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

So in this verse he does two things: he describes the nature, and then also the work, of the Son. First he gives three points on the nature of the Son, and then he gives 2 points on the work of the Son, what he has done, and what he is doing now. And then in the next verse he'll give the implications of all of that, he'll come back to this point about him being the heir.

WHO BEING THE BRIGHTNESS OF HIS GLORY

So the first thing that he does here is tell us several things about the nature of the Son. About who he is, as this One by whom God made the worlds.

And the first thing that it says is, "Who being the the brightness of his glory."

And so the Son is the brightness of God's glory.

And this is hugely significant. And not just because it makes the Son one with God himself. Not just because it means the he has been eternally with the Father.

There is so much that we could say about that. We could take whole sermons and just talk about the relationship between the Son and the Father. Or just talk about the glory, the glory of God.

But the most important takeaway here, is the contrast between the Son, and the former ministers of the word of God, the prophets.

You see, the prophets could not approach to the glory of God. When they caught just a little glimpse of God's glory, they'd become as a dead man.

Despite all of the things that God showed them, there were some things that they still could not see. They could not see God's glory.

If there was one prophet that got closer to seeing the glory of God than anybody else, it was Moses. He got to see the similitude of it. So much so that his face shown when he went out to speak to the people.

But even the great prophet Moses, who talked with God, as it were face to face, as no other prophet ever did, even he could not see all the glory of God.

Exodus 33:17 And the LORD said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name.
18 And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy **glory**.

So God is showing grace to Moses, and Moses decides this is the best chance he'll ever get to ask to see the glory of the LORD.

19 And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.

20 And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.

21 And the LORD said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock:

22 And it shall come to pass, while my **glory** passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by:

23 And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen.

And so Moses could not see the glory of God. No man can see his face, and live.

And so do you see the enormous contrast between the ministry of the prophets, and the word spoken by the Son? On the one hand you have men who cannot see the glory of God, and on the other hand you have the One who is the brightness of God's glory.

And the implication is, that the prophets, God could show them some things, but there were other things that he could not. There were some things that they could not fully see. Their ministry was limited, it was handicapped, they could not declare all the counsel of God, all the glory of God, because they could not see all his glory, and live. They could not see God's face.

But now the one who is the brightness of God's glory has spoken. And we see why that is so important. Because he's not limited. He is not handicapped. He is not unable to declare all things. He is not unable to comprehend all of God's glory. He *is* God's glory. And so he can tell us, he can declare to us, things that the prophets could never see. And would never have been able to see. Because they were but prophets. But he, is the Son.

And so no prophet could ever open the book and loose the seals. Only Christ could do that. Only the Son.

Only he, "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person."

THE EXPRESS IMAGE OF HIS PERSON

And so again, just as they could not see God's glory, they could not see his face. But the Son is the express image of God. He is the face of the Father.

You see, what it is saying here, is that since Jesus is the light of the glory that comes from God, then when you look at God, he's the thing that you see. You see the Son.

You see the Son, because it is the Son that is emanating out from the Father, he is the light of the glory that is coming from the Father. Everything that is proceeding out of the Father, that you are seeing, is the Son. So much so that he said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

You see, the term “express,” we use that similarly today, when we say that somebody expressed themselves. That means that they came out and said what they were thinking. They gave voice to it. And sometimes we also might say something like, “they express themselves through art.” That that is a form of expression. Artistic expression.

And so to express something, the way that the Bible uses it, is to give shape to it, to give form to it. To express it.

And so when it says that the Son is the express image of the Father, it is saying that when God’s person is expressed, when it is shown, when it is made visible, when it is given form, when it is expressed, that that the thing that gives expression to it, is the Son. He is the express image of his person.

He is the brightness, the light, of his glory. And so the Son is the express image of the person of the Father. Not he looks just like the Father. Not he is the perfect resemblance. But he is the express image itself. When you are looking at the Father, it’s him that you are seeing.

Basically the relationship between the Son and the Father is this. And this is a side-note, we’ll just take one small detour here.

The relationship between the Son and the Father, is that the Son is everything that proceeds forth from the Father.

He is the brightness of God’s glory. When God’s glory shines out from him, that’s the Son.

He is the word of God. When God speaks, and the word goes out from him, that is the Son.

Whatever it is that comes forth from the Father, that’s the Son.

So we don’t have time to treat this properly, whole studies could be done on that. But the nature of the Godhead is such that the Father does nothing without the Son. So that without him was not any thing made that was made.

And so as we said, this is once again a contrast with the prophets. The Son has an absolutely complete and full and intimate knowledge of the person of God, of the image of God, of the glory of God, of the work of God. Because it is through him that all of that is, it is he that is the face of the Father, it is he that does what the Father wills.

John 10:15 [Jesus said:] As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father...

And so there is no limits on the ministry of the Son. He can declare all the will of God, all the work of God, the whole person of God, because he is the express image of his person, and the brightness of his glory.

Wow. Can it get any better than that?

“Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power.”

UPHOLDING ALL THINGS BY THE WORD OF HIS POWER

Did he just do that? Did he just up the ante once again? I think he did.

Here is, not just a declaration of the nature of the Son, of his superior knowledge of God, that surpasses anything the prophets could ever see. But here is a declaration of the power of the very word of the Son itself.

Not only is the Son the ultimate messenger from God, but his word also excels accordingly. He upholds all things with the word of his power.

And note how it says that. Not, “his word of power,” but, “the word of his power.” It is one thing to have a word of power. It is another thing when your word is the word of your power. You see, Christ doesn't have one word that is a word of power, and another word that isn't a word of power. No, his word simply is the word of his power. All of his word, everything that he speaks, carries that power behind it. His word simply just is powerful. Just because *he* is powerful. It is the word of his power.

And so it is that word of the Son that upholds all things. Remember he just said that it was the Son who made the worlds. And so how did he do that? By his word. “And God said...” And so God spoke, and the word he spoke was the word of the power of the Son, and that word caused what God said to become reality, instantaneously. And in fact that word is so powerful that it continues to uphold all things. God spoke once and said let it be, and it still is, the word is still powerfully binding reality so that it conforms to God's command so long ago. The universe continues to exist, the earth remains. And so the Son upholds all things with the word of his power. And so that's a very powerful word. When he says it, it is so. It comes to pass, and it remains, and it cannot be changed. And so we better pay attention to what the Son has to say, because he isn't just declaring the word of God, he *is* the word of God, it is his very word the upholds the world.

And this once again also begins to have bearing on them as heirs hoping to receive the promise. If it is the Son that is upholding all things, just as he will inherit all things, then if he is going to uphold your inheritance that you've been promised, if your inheritance is going to remain for all eternity, then it is the Son who is going to have to uphold it, as a part of his own inheritance. And so if you want an eternal inheritance, you sure better pay attention to what the Son has got to say, because what he says goes. He's the one who controls it. He is the one who holds it all. What he says is going to last, is going to last. And what he doesn't, won't. And so if you want the eternal inheritance, you have to get the one that the Son says is going to be everlasting.

And so the prophets could say something, that didn't make it so, they were just men, only what they said by the Spirit was truth. But when the Son says something, hey, it is so. He himself has the power to make it so. He is the one who upholds all things with his word. And so he is not just the messenger, he is also the one who performs the word. There is no mediator that you can try to go through, there is no middle man somewhere, there is no other point in the process where you can try to get your say in. He's the whole show, all on his own. And so it is absolutely imperative to heed what he is telling you, about how to partake in his inheritance. Because there is absolutely, positively, no other way that you're going to get anything, but through him.

“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 on the right hand of the Majesty on high.”

BY HIMSELF

And so here is another way that it is him alone, there is no middle man: he made the atonement by himself as well.

There aren't many different priests, many different ways to purge away sins. There is just One who can do it. And he's done it. And he did it by himself. Nobody else involved in any way.

And so once again he is the sole person that you have to go through, to get a part of the inheritance.

PURGED OUR SINS

And so he by himself purged our sins.

And by talking about purging our sins, he's now bringing the priesthood into this. Up to here it has been all kingdom. But remember, you can't get into the kingdom, without the priesthood. We have all come short of the glory of God, we are not worthy, it is only the priesthood that can make us partakers.

And so having declared that the Son alone is the worthy heir of the kingdom, he also declares how that it is only the work of the Son that purges our sins, and makes us worthy to enter into his kingdom.

The kingdom is totally his, it is wholly his inheritance, and he is also the sole priest who administers access into it.

And so what Paul is doing here is pointing out that just as there was a contrast between the Son and the OT prophets, there is a contrast between the Son and the OT priesthood.

And he's going to expound on that a lot later on, so I don't think that we need to go into it in depth here. We'll just point out the main big contrasts.

And the first contrast is that "by himself" that we pointed out. The Son is the sole priest here.

That isn't the way that the OT Levitical priesthood worked. In the OT there were many priests, and over time, many high priests. And it took all of those priests, continually offering sacrifices, to attempt to maintain Israel's relationship with God, that they might be permitted to remain in the promised land.

And that priesthood repeatedly failed. They got kicked out of the inheritance, and carried away captive.

And so like the ministry of the prophets, the ministry of the Levite priests was a continuing ministry, that had no finality to it. That was imperfect.

But now, the Son has come, and he has perfected the priesthood. Not only has he perfected the word of God, not only has he perfected the inheritance, but he has also perfected the priesthood.

And so just as there is no more need of prophets, because the Son has spoken, there is no more need of priests, because the Son, by himself, has made atonement.

"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 on the right hand of the Majesty on high."

SAT DOWN

And so the Son, the brightness of God's glory, after he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of God.

Now, Paul is going to make much of the fact that Christ sat down, later on. So why is that so significant? What's the big deal with that?

Well, think about priests. Think about what a priest does. When a priest is ministering, when he is ministering at the altar, he is never sitting down. Sitting down has absolutely no part in a priest's ministry. He's always standing up, when he is making atonement. When he is doing what a priest does.

And so Paul is pointing out another contrast between the Son and the OT priests. The Son purged our sins, and then sat down, and he's been sitting ever since. But the Levite priests never did. They had to stand, and minister, day after day, year after year. They could never just sit down and say, "OK, I'm done."

But the Son, after he had purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high. Because his ministry is over. He no longer needs to stand, because he has made atonement.

And so Paul gave us those three points on the nature of the Son, and now has declared the work of the Son, what he did for us on our behalf.

And he'll go into that in more detail later on.

But he's told us what the Son has been from eternity past, he just declared what the Son has done now, and he's told us the Son's current state, and finally he's going to come back to the future, and the Son's eternal inheritance.

So as we said, he went back to the beginning, and he's hitting the high-points in the Son's career as he brings us back to that concept of him being the heir of all things.

ON THE RIGHT HAND OF THE MAJESTY ON HIGH

And he begins to bring us back to the kingdom and the inheritance when he tells us where the Son sat down. He says that the Son sat down "on the right hand of the Majesty on high." And being seated on the right hand of the throne, is significant. That's the preferred position. That is where the number two guy sits, beside the king. The king's right-hand man.

And it is particularly important because there are OT prophecies that talk about God's right hand, and who would sit on his right hand. What that would mean. And so this symbolized something to them, that Paul is actually going to expound from one of those prophecies, later on in chapter 1. So we'll see more about this next time, but we'll just look at two significant OT passages that talk about the right hand of God.

Psalms 16:8 I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope.

10 For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

So it is talking about Christ, about a man who would rise from the dead.

11 Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; **at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.**

And so that man who rose again would come to be at the right hand of God. And at God's right hand there are pleasures for evermore. And by saying that, by saying that there is eternal pleasure at the right hand of God, that relates to the inheritance. Whoever was at God's right hand would receive that inheritance, pleasures, for evermore.

And so by pointing out that Jesus, the Son, is sitting at God's right hand, he's pointing out that he is in that position that brings eternal pleasures. That he is in that preferred spot, that gives him the inheritance.

Psalms 80:14 Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts: look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine;

15 And the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch that thou madest strong for thyself.

16 It is burned with fire, it is cut down: they perish at the rebuke of thy countenance.

17 Let thy hand be upon **the man of thy right hand**, upon the son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself.

18 So will not we go back from thee: quicken us, and we will call upon thy name.

19 Turn us again, O LORD God of hosts, cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.

And so it is prophesying there about the redemption of Israel, about when they come to salvation. And it says that that will happen through a man, that it calls "the man of thy right hand," the man of God's right hand, that he has made strong for himself.

And so the salvation of Israel, and their receiving of the inheritance was prophesied before, in the OT, that it would come through a man, who was the man of God's right hand. And Paul is pointing out here that that man is Jesus, the Son.

And so there were OT prophecies about how the man at the right hand of God would receive and dispense the inheritance. The kingdom would be under his control. He would be God's right hand man, he would be able to do whatever he pleased, under the Father. He would be the second in the kingdom, and what he would say, would go.

And so Paul says that the Son sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

And this use of the term majesty here, is also very carefully chosen. Because that is also something that relates to many OT prophecies.

There are many OT passages that talk about the majesty of God. His power, his honor, his glory, his strength, his beauty. His majesty.

And the one who sits on the right hand, has had conferred on them the majesty of the throne.

They have essentially all of the power, all of the majesty that the king does.

And this is also once again contrasting with the OT priests. *They* couldn't approach to the glory and majesty of God either. Any more than the prophets could. They could not come before his Majesty, they could not come before his throne. They could only come before his mercy seat. Even the high priest, the holiest man, most sanctified and consecrated man, the best that he could do, was to come before a model of the *mercy seat* of God. And he could only do that once a year, bringing with him the blood of animals.

But the Son, after he had purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty, not in the holiest of holies, but on high. Not in the earthly temple, but in heaven itself.

And the significance of that is that it tells us how acceptable his sacrifice was to God. How holy, he as a priest, is.

And he is as holy as you can get. You cannot get any closer to God than that. He is holier than any earthly priest can be.

And his sacrifice was accepted. It was accepted by God. So much so that after he made it he sat down, signifying that the atonement had been accomplished. And where else, but on the right hand of the Majesty itself, where it is manifest that he has been made the heir of the kingdom. Finally a sacrifice has been made that provides eternal inheritance in the kingdom. And so the inheritance is sure.

And so again, the Hebrews better listen up. They better pay attention to what the Son has to say. Because he's got it all. He alone controls the kingdom, and he is the only priest who can

administer access to it. And so they better take heed to what he's said to them, if they want to receive that inheritance that was promised to their fathers.

Verse 4

Hebrews 1:4 Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

And so the Son has obtained an excellent inheritance, a more excellent name than the angels. And Paul will begin to expound that in the rest of chapter 1. And so we'll stop there, and pick up in verse 4 next time.

Summary

So that gives you a taste of what the book of Hebrews is going to be like. This is, as I said, a summary, a condensed version. This is basically Paul's sermon outline. And so this is what he's going to be expounding on in the rest of the book.

Now there's not really a lot to go into here, in terms of the prophetic aspect of the book of Hebrews. There's nothing to really go into in detail in regard to that here. But you can get the general feel of how that works in here.

What we see here in this basic outline is a declaration of how the work of Christ relates to the eternal kingdom. It is about how the same one who came to earth as a man and died for our sins, is also the one who is the heir of all things. And so in talking about that inheritance, about Christ receiving the kingdom, that is talking about the end times. The culmination. It is talking about the return of Christ to earth.

And so the subject matter of the book of Hebrews directly relates to the time when Christ comes back and the Hebrews receive their inheritance through him, through his kingdom.

And so it is a forward-looking, end-times related subject. And so naturally what it will be talking about here will be very relevant to the Hebrews during the end times, during the time of Jacob's trouble, leading up to Christ's millennial reign.

And so you should be able to start to see how that prophetic aspect is going to work in here, how this is going to relate to that. How the subject of the book of Hebrews is actually the end times. It is really an end-times book. Every bit as much as Revelation is.

And so as we go through the book of Hebrews, we'll not only look at it from the perspective of the first-century Hebrew, but also from the perspective of the last-century Hebrew, of the tribulation Hebrew, as all Israel turns back to God, and begins to seek to receive their salvation and inheritance, through the Son.

And so he said here that "God hath in these *last days* spoken unto us by his Son."

And that phrase "last days" is consistently used throughout scripture to refer to the end times.

And so Paul was pointing out to his hearers that we are in the last days, that since the Son has spoken, we are now approaching the end. It makes sense, the Son has the last word, so once he has spoken, we must be in the last days.

And so he is speaking to people during the last days. And how much truer will that be during the tribulation?

And so that phrase, "the last days", comes from the OT. And by saying that, he is calling the mind of the Hebrew listener to one of the great prophecies of what will happen in the last days,

from the book of Isaiah, chapter 2. And that prophecy is one that you can't miss, because God repeated it again in Micah chapter 4. So this is one that every Hebrew should have known, when they heard the term "last days", this is what would have come to mind:

Isaiah 2:1 The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

2 And it shall come to pass in the **last days**, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

3 And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

4 And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

5 O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD.

So that prophecy of the last days, was a prophecy of the kingdom. Of how the kingdom would be exalted, and the LORD's house would be exalted, and all nations would come to it. And the earth would have peace. Because they would walk in the light of the LORD.

And there the house of Jacob is admonished to walk in the light of the LORD. And so here Paul is declaring that light to them, calling their attention to the word from the One who is that light of the LORD, the brightness of his glory.

And so that prophecy of the last days was a prophecy of them finally receiving their inheritance, finally having peace, and their kingdom being exalted.

And so in these last days God has spoken to us by his Son, who has been appointed heir of that kingdom, and we have to heed his word to find out how we can become a part of it, the Hebrews need to pay close attention to receive knowledge of how to get their inheritance.

In the tribulation, that time will be about to come upon them. It will be urgent that they understand this, that they hear the message God has sent by his Son, because the kingdom will be about to be exalted, the inheritance will be about to be doled out, and if they haven't been made partakers of it, it will soon be too late.

And in Isaiah 2, it goes on to point out that Israel was not ready for that, that they were not worthy, that they had left the hope of the kingdom for the false hope of earthly kings and idols.

They were not such as could inherit the kingdom, they were not prepared for those last days.

And so since those last days are here, and the Son has spoken, the Hebrews need to take stock of themselves, and consider what the Son has said, to be sure that they are now ready, that they will be such as can enter into that kingdom, when it comes.

And so Israel will be saved, and receive their inheritance. In the last days their kingdom will be exalted. And in order to participate in that, they'll need to understand what it is saying here in Hebrews. Or they won't be worthy to be the heirs of that kingdom.

UNTO US

One final thing. In verse 2 he said that God "hath in these last days spoken *unto us* by his Son." When he says "unto us", that could be a reference to that generation, as opposed to the fathers. But remember what fathers he is talking about there. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The fathers of the Hebrews. And so there is also a very real sense in which the "us" there is not just that generation in general, just as "the fathers" is not just the people of the past in general. The "us" is the Hebrews. And it is true that Christ's ministry was very focused on the Hebrews, particularly in the words that he spoke. The people he spoke to were Hebrews.

I can only think of two times when Jesus is confronted with speaking, in terms of his ministry, to non-Hebrews. And on both of those occasions he actually attempts to avoid it.

In the first case there is that Syrophenician woman that kept pestering Christ about her devil-possessed daughter. In Mark 7. And Jesus ignored her. Until finally she cornered him, and argued with him until she convinced him to heal her child.

Then there was a group of Greeks that came up to the feast of Passover, and asked Jesus's disciples if they could see him. It talks about that in John 12. And when they went and told Jesus, he gave a little speech in front of everybody there, and then it says that he went and hid himself.

And so Jesus was speaking this word to the Hebrews. And avoided gentiles.

Now I know that many of you are wondering, "what about the Samaritan woman at the well?"

And you say, "see, she wasn't a Jew." And that's true. She wasn't a Jew, but she was still a Hebrew. She was still a daughter of Jacob, who honored the forefathers. And so although the Samaritans didn't take part in the Jewish religious system, they were still Hebrews. And so Jesus ministered unto them, just like he ministered to the other Hebrews, who weren't strict Jews, in Galilee and elsewhere.

But he didn't minister to Gentiles.

Now, don't misunderstand. I'm not trying to tell you that God doesn't care about Gentiles, or that Jesus didn't die for the whole world. He did, remember, he bought the whole field. But you see, just because God loves the whole world, and decided to save the whole world, doesn't mean that the Hebrews aren't special. Yes, in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek. But, God still has a special place, a special plan, for Israel as a nation, for the Hebrews, ethnically, beyond just what all nations have equally in Christ. That was true in the OT, and it has not changed in the NT.

And don't get the wrong idea. I'm not Hebrew. To my knowledge, I have no Jewish ancestry. I haven't been DNA tested or anything, but I'm not saying this from the perspective of a Hebrew, or a Hebrew wannabe. I'm saying this from the perspective of a Gentile Bible-believer, who is in Christ, and thus through Christ have myself become an heir of the world.

But you see, once the bride of Christ is completed, things are going to essentially return to the OT order, where God fosters a special relationship with the nation of Israel, that he does not have with any other nation. And that will last forever. The Gentile nations, will not.

You see we kind of have the same problem today that the Pharisees and Jewish leaders had. That the OT Hebrews had at the time of Christ. Just as they were very zealous of the OT, we are very zealous of the NT. And so we look back at them, at their zealousness of the OT and their present age, and we see how they were stuck in that OT thinking, when they should have realized that the old covenant was not the ultimate thing. And then in the same breath, we fall into the same pit. We say, "The NT is the ultimate thing."

And there is a sense in which that is true. But the problem is that we often conflate the NT with the church age. As if this is the final age. As if this is the eternal age.

Now, we acknowledge that there are some things that are going to change, that Christ is going to be coming back. Just as the Hebrews would have acknowledged that they were waiting for the first coming of Christ. But you see the problem is, that despite the fact that they knew that Christ was coming, they were so zealous of the old covenant that they believed that that was the way that mankind would relate to God through all eternity. Through the temple order. And we get so that we are so zealous of the NT, of the church, that we think that this is the way that mankind is going to relate to God for all eternity. And we're really making the same mistake that they did. Because it isn't.

Because the church age is a temporary period.

Now, don't misunderstand. The people who become members of the bride of Christ, will be members of the bride of Christ for all eternity. And they'll relate to God in that way for all eternity. But there is only a short window of time during which we can become members of the bride of Christ. And that window is going to one day close. And when it does, when the church age ends, when the bride of Christ is full, man will no longer be able to relate to God in exactly that way. They will still have to come to God through Christ, but they won't be becoming members of the bride of Christ. Because at that point, in the millennium, he's already married. And it really isn't fair for the bride to get bigger after the wedding. You know what I mean?

So we need to stop being chronological snobs, to stop being so zealous of the current age that we are living in that we forget that it is just one part of God's multistep plan for mankind. It is just one step. And there will come a point when it is completed, and then mankind will no longer relate to God in that exact way. Those outside the bride of Christ will no longer be coming into the bride of Christ.

And so essentially what will happen, is that once the church age is completed, the way that the nations relate to God will revert back to the OT. Israel will once again be special, they will be God's chosen people. And those among the Gentile nations will have to join in service to God with Israel, in order to come to him.

So in the millennium you basically have a reestablishment of the OT order, though of course with a NT twist. But essentially during the reign of Christ in the millennium, the nations relate to God in much the same way that they did during the reign of David and Solomon.

Heresy! Throw him out and stone him! He's challenging the established order!

I know, I know. You're very, very zealous of the church, you're very, very zealous of the church age. But sorry, it isn't eternal. Man is not going to relate to God or come to God in this exact way, forever. It is a period of time that is going to end.

And so, ironically, I think this study of the book of Hebrews is going to be just as good for those of us who are zealous of the NT, as it was for those who were zealous of the OT. Because it is going to acquaint our minds better with the fact that this age is coming to a close and God is going to resume his work with Israel. Not by bringing them into the body of Christ. But by fulfilling his promises made in the OT, by redeeming them as his chosen people.

You know, it is a fascinating thing about OT prophecy of the end times, that a lot of it incorporates that more-OT perspective. And I suppose that that's a reason why Israel missed the coming of the church age, why they thought that the OT order would continue forever. But there is a sense in which they were right. It won't continue forever, and it will be tempered with the NT, but in the time of the end, the nations will relate to God much more as they did in the OT. And so that's why you can study the OT prophecies and almost miss the church age. Because the church age is just a period with bookends of God relating to man in a similar way that he did in the OT.

That will take some time to grow on you, but once you understand it, I think you will understand the Bible much better, and eschatology much better.

And it will be growing on us as we study Hebrews. It is going to continue to challenge us to look at the big picture, to look beyond the present age, and look at future steps that will take place in God's plan for mankind, and in particular, for Israel.