Candlelight Christian Fellowship

Hebrews (Chapter 1 – Lesson 3)

**Hebrews 1 (NKJV)**

*“God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For to which of the angels did He ever say: ‘You are My Son, today I have begotten You’? And again: ‘I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son’? But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: ‘Let all the angels of God worship Him.’ And of the angels He says: ‘Who makes His angels spirits and His ministers a flame of fire.’ But to the Son He says: ‘Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions.’ And: ‘You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You remain; and they will all grow old like a garment; like a cloak You will fold them up, and they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will not fail.’ But to which of the angels has He ever said: ‘Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool’? Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?”*

**Creator and Heir**

Of note is the fact that Jesus is both Creator and Heir. For *“[God] has appointed [Jesus] heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power”* (vss. 2–3). God created all things for His own pleasure, and intended to receive for Himself that which He created and made. He said, *“…I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure”* (Isaiah 46:9–10). Therefore, as sons and daughters of God, we can see that in the same way God foreordained His reception of all things, He has also intended this blessing on behalf of the believer. For *“we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together”* (Romans 8:16b–17).

**The Divine Sustainer**

All that God has made is sustained by Him, and, as creation’s designer, He sustains and *“uphold[s] all things by the word of His power”* (vs. 3). *“And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist [are composed and held together]”* (Colossians 1:17). Therefore, we know that God has total sovereign control over all He has made and is working with all things according to His own purposes and pleasure—as stated, *“My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure.”*

Were it not for God’s all-encompassing control, everything would simply melt down. He holds all things together for His own pleasure and purpose so that He may share it with those who are *“joint heirs”* with Jesus the Messiah.

**Redeemed – Without our Help**

Among the many powerful verses in Scripture declaring Jesus’ finished work of redemption, none quite so completely say what the author declared in the last words of verse 3. He tells us that Jesus, *“who being the brightness of [God’s] glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high”* (Hebrews 1:3). *“Sat down”* declares the work finished.

The Hebrew people who first heard (and understood) these words were privileged to hear the best news any person will ever hear. Prior to Jesus’ vicarious suffering and sacrificial death, no sin was *“purged.”* Sins were simply covered. The Old Covenant made no provision for the complete removal of sin(s). *“For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins”* (Hebrews 10:4). However, in the New Covenant, God says, *“Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more”* (Hebrews 10:17). These words harmonize with the introduction of Jesus by John the Baptist who said that Jesus was *“the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world”* (see John 1:29) and who wrote in John, *“It is finished!”* (John 19:30).

Any Jew who heard the words of either John the Baptist or John the Evangelist would have been surprised by these statements—unless they were perceptive enough to understand these truths in regard to the New Covenant promise.

As believers, we can be assured that all of our sins have been completely forgiven and that there will be no remembrance of them at all. This fact should call the true believer to genuine praise and worship. No fear of rejection and/or future punitive consequence for sin should ever plague the true believer. Our sins were dealt with at the cross. Sadly, many have not been taught this glorious truth and/or have been taught to the contrary. Too many believers today live with the guilt of sin and the fear of facing the Lord. This should never be!

Jesus having finished the work of redemption *“sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high”* (vs. 3)—that is, at the right hand of the Father. (See also Hebrews 8:1, 10:12, and 12:2) *“Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”* (Philippians 2:9–11).

**Better than the Angels**

As Creator and Redeemer, Jesus, as incarnate God, *“having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they”* (vs. 4) does not indicate a non-pre-incarnate state, nor that Jesus was any less at any time. This expression simply begins an argument against the idea that Jesus was created or was the manifestation of an angel as some suggest. (Mormons suggest that Jesus is the spirit brother of Lucifer. Jehovah’s Witnesses suggest that Michael the archangel was a pre-incarnate manifestation of Jesus. These are heretical teachings.)

Further, the expression *“better than the angels”* insists that the Hebrews reject the worship of angels, which was forbidden in Scripture. It removes confusion in regard to Jesus’ deity—for even *“the angels of God worship Him”* (vs. 6).

The fact that Jesus the Messiah has *“by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they”* speaks to Jesus’ superiority. The obtaining of the name was certainly a reflection of Jesus’ accomplishments as Redeemer but should not be considered meritorious alone.

The angels are said to be those who, in service to God, minister to those who will inherit the salvation God has provided us in Jesus. The author said, *“And of the angels He says: “Who makes His angels spirits and His ministers a flame of fire”* (vs. 7), and, *“But to which of the angels has He ever said: ‘Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool’? Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?”* (vss. 13–14).

**As Declared by the Father**

The author reminds the Hebrews that God is the one who spoke concerning His only begotten Son. He recites from Psalm 2:7 and 2 Samuel 7:14 saying, *“For to which of the angels did He ever say: ‘You are My Son, today I have begotten You’?* *And again: ‘I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son’?”* (vs. 5). *“Begotten”* here is *“gennao.”* It means to father as the male agent responsible for conception. Jesus, as the Son of God, was begotten (*monogenes*: one and only—of the same) into the world through the miraculous process of incarnation as declared by the Father and conceived by the Holy Spirit. (See Matthew 1:20 and John 3:16)

The virgin birth of Jesus comes into view when one considers this word *“begotten.”* Jesus is the one and only Son of God who was *“begotten”* supernaturally as the genetic Son of the Father. Although Jesus has always been the eternal Son of God, His incarnation provided a physical component to His person previously unrealized.

**Incarnate and Firstborn**

The incarnation of Jesus was not the origin of Jesus’ role as Son. He is the eternal Son of God. This is the method by which God has manifested Himself. The eternal nature of God the Son does not in any way suggest that Jesus is any less than the Father, and is in no way greater or less than the Holy Spirit. However, in the economics (system of organization, operation, or distribution) of the Godhead, Jesus is the eternal God subject to the Father, and the Holy Spirit is the eternal God subject to both the Father and His Son. In this way, we understand that God the Father sent His only begotten Son into the world, and the Father and the Son send forth the Holy Spirit.

The economic methodology of the Godhead does not suggest any differing purpose or plan in the Godhead. It does not suggest any disunity of any kind. It is simply the system by which God has organized His methods and purposes. (See John 3:16–17, John 6:40, and 1 John 4:9–10 where God sends His only begotten into the world and John 15:26, John 16:7, and John 14:26 where the Father and the Son send the Holy Spirit.)

All three persons of the Trinity are of the same personality, nature, purpose, and essence. However, each member of the Godhead functions in various roles and activities. Our salvation is based on the Father’s power and love, the Son’s death and resurrection (see 1 John 2:2 and Ephesians 2:6), and the Holy Spirit’s work of regeneration and the sealing of the believer (see Ephesians 4:30 and Titus 3:5).

When God the Son was manifest at His incarnation, He (Jesus) the *“firstborn”* was noted as such in order to declare His irrevocable pre-incarnate position over all creation. *“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation”* (Colossians 1:15). *“But when He again brings the firstborn into the world He says: ‘Let all the angels of God worship Him’”* (vs. 6). (As stated above, the author insisted that the Hebrews reject the worship of angels. Therefore, as *“better than the angels”* (vs. 4) and as *“firstborn”* (vs. 6), He is exalted in order to show His permanent and immutable pre-incarnate position.)

When declared by the Father as Son, Jesus the *“firstborn”* was not first born in the sense that He was the first of several in succession. *“Firstborn”* speaks of preeminence—not sequence. Jesus is God.

**As Heir of all Things**

In addition to the economic methodology manifested in the eternal Godhead, Jesus, in submission to God the Father, subjected Himself to the Father as a process of His earthly ministry. (See Philippians 2:1–11 and John 4:34; 5:17–47.)

The Father/Son relationship represents Jesus as Messiah with complete heirship to all enjoyed in the triune nature of the Godhead. He, as God the Son, was *“appointed heir of all things”* as stated in vss. 2–3.

When all things have been given to and obtained by the Son, He Himself will present all He has “inherited” to God the Father. (See 1 Corinthians 15:23b–24) This demonstrates the fact that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit co-equally exist in purpose and unity. He will obtain all He has created and made for Himself. As Believers, we receive an inheritance in Jesus. Our inheritance (in Him) co-mingles with the fact that we ourselves are His inheritance. *“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His gracewhich He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory”* (Ephesians 1:7–12). Adding to this, Paul prayed that *“the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints”* (Ephesians 1:18).

**The Joy and Gladness Jesus Inherits by His Reign**

Continuing His argument for the greatness of Jesus as God the Son, the author says, *“to the Son He says: ‘Your throne, O God, is forever and ever;* *a* *scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness;* *therefore God, Your God,* *has anointed You* *with the oil of gladness more than Your companions”* (vs. 8–9). The scepter speaks of His rule, His companions being any and all who have ruled or reigned. Jesus is greater. He alone is righteous. His rule demonstrated a perfect hatred for evil and lawlessness, and a perfect love for truth and right. Therefore, in His inheritance, He is *“anointed”* with the *“oil of gladness”*—a rejoicing over all His creation and work of redemption—an inheritance He receives, “*to the praise of His glory”* (Ephesians 1:12).

**Notes:**

**Questions:**

1. **True or False:** God created all things for His own pleasure, and intended to receive for Himself that which He created and made.
2. **True or False:** As sons and daughters of God, we can see that in the same way God foreordained His reception of all things, He has also intended this blessing on behalf of some believers.
3. **True or False:** God has total sovereign control over all He has made and is working with all things according to His own purposes and pleasure.
4. **True or False:** Jesus needed and needs our help with our redemption.
5. **True or False:** As believers, we can be assured that all of our sins have been completely forgiven, and that there will be no remembrance of them at all.
6. **True or False:** The expression *“better than the angels”* insists that the Hebrews may worship angels but not as much as Jesus.
7. **True or False:** Jesus is the one and only Son of God who was *“begotten”* supernaturally as the genetic Son of the Father.
8. **True or False:** In the economics (system of organization, operation, or distribution) of the Godhead, Jesus is the eternal God subject to the Father, and the Holy Spirit is the eternal God subject to both the Father and His Son.
9. **True or False:** All three persons of the Trinity are of the same personality, nature, purpose, and essence. However, each member of the Godhead functions in various roles and activities.
10. **True or False:** The Father/Son relationship represents Jesus as Messiah with complete heirship to all enjoyed in the triune nature of the Godhead.