

WCCC 1992

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But We See Jesus (1)

The Identity of Jesus

Bible Passages

Hebrews 1:1-3

1 God having spoken in many parts and in many ways formerly to the fathers in the prophets, 2 at the end of these days has spoken to us in the person of the Son, whom he has established heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; 3 who being the effulgence of his glory and the expression of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, having made by himself the purification of sins, set himself down on the right hand of the greatness on high.

Hebrews 2:7-10

*7 Thou hast made him some little inferior to the angels; thou hast crowned him with glory and honour, and hast set him over the works of thy hands; 8 thou hast subjected all things under his feet. For in subjecting all things to him, he has left nothing unsubject to him. But now we see not yet all things subjected to *him*, 9 but we see Jesus, who was made some little inferior to angels on account of the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; so that by the grace of God he should taste death for every thing. 10 For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make perfect the leader of their salvation through sufferings.*

Need to receive heavenly revelation into the depth of spirit

This morning, we would be examining the first thing, "The Identity of Jesus." When we want to know a person, we first find out His identity. For example, in the Bible, when John the Baptist came out to preach, immediately the Jews sent scribes, pharisees and priests from Jerusalem to question John's identity. They asked, "Who are you actually? Are you the Christ who is to come?" He answered no. "Then are you Elijah? Are you the Prophet?" He answered no to both. They

were there to investigate his identity. When our Lord was on the earth, when He came out to work, people also investigated His identity. He went to the Temple and cleansed the Temple. Immediately they asked Him, “By what authority have you done this? Who are you actually? What is your identity?”

Why? Because authority comes with identity, and qualification comes with identity. With identity, He can speak and He can do things, and what He speaks and does would become valuable. Therefore, we know identity is very important. When our Lord started to be rejected by the Jews, He retreated to Caesarea-Philippi, and He also asked His disciples, “Who do men say I, the Son of Man, am?” (Matthew 16:13) meaning “What is my identity?” And then He asked them again, “Who do you (who had been with me the whole time) say I am?” Thank God! Simon Peter received the heavenly revelation. He said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” You are the Anointed One, whom God has sent to accomplish the work of redemption. This was His ministry. “You are the Son of the living God.” This is His identity. Therefore, in order for us to know the Lord Jesus, we must first know His identity. Now it is not hard to find out about the identity of a person. You just need to find out who he is, where he was born, who his parents are, who his siblings are, how much education he has received, and what is his background. Then we have found out his identity. However, finding out the identity of the Lord isn’t that easy. When our Lord was in the world, that group of people from Galilee said, “We know who He is!” He grew up in our town of Nazareth. His father was a carpenter. He Himself was also a carpenter. We knew whom His brothers were, and His sisters dwell among us (See Matthew 13:53-56; Mark 6:1-8). We can say that, they have very clear information about the identity of Lord Jesus. Yet, did they know Lord Jesus? They totally didn’t. They have mistaken His identity, so they have rejected Him.

How about us today? We have the 4 gospels before us. After reading the 4 gospels, we can say that we have searched His identity, and we know what Lord Jesus is. This is especially true for those who grow up from a Christian family. (I was one of them. I read the Bible since young, and I was very familiar with the stories of Lord Jesus. Not only so, I even gave a message before I was saved!) However, is it really true that after having read the 4 gospels, I knew the identity of Lord Jesus? At the beginning, I totally did not know Him. Therefore, we see that knowing the identity of Lord Jesus is not as simple as we thought. When Peter confessed the lord, what did the Lord say? “Blessed are thou, Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and blood has not revealed it to thee.” (Matthew 16:17) To know the identity of the Lord, it is never possible to go by flesh and blood. He said, “but my Father who is in the heavens (has revealed it).” Therefore, to know the identity of the Lord, we must ask for the revelation of the Lord. Even just the plain text of the Bible is not sufficient for us to know Him. We need to receive the heavenly revelation into the depth of our spirit, so that the words in the Bible becomes the living words that the Holy Spirit speaks to us. I have to admit that I am not able to let you see Jesus. Only the Spirit of God may let you see Him. I know that you cannot see the Lord Jesus by yourselves either. I hope that as we

fellowship, our hearts look upon our Lord, and may the Spirit of the Lord enliven His word, so that we can see the Lord Jesus in the depths of our spirit.

The identity of the Lord

(1) The Son of God

(1) The word of God

The Book of Hebrews starts with the phrase “God having spoken.” Our God is a God who speaks. He hopes to tell us everything that is in His heart. If God does speak, no one could know God. But thank God, our God is a God who speaks. He has spoken formerly to the fathers in the prophets. At that time, what He could say was limited by men, so He had to speak in many parts and in many ways. We can say that He could only speak in pieces. This was not because God was not willing, but because men had limited God. But thank and praise God, at the end of these days, (The end of these days is an idiom for the Jews, meaning the days of the Messiah. Therefore, when our Lord came to the world, the end of these days had started. When our Lord comes the second time, it would mark the end of the end of these days.) God dwells in His Son to speak to us. When His Son speaks, it is God who speaks inside Him, because He is the word of God (the saying of God). Not only He speaks, but God speaks, too, and when He lives on the earth, He manifests God. Therefore, the revelation of God is the most complete in the Son.

(2) The heir of all things

Jesus is the Son of God. The Father and the Son are one. When man hears of Him, he has heard of the Father. When man sees Him, he has seen the Father. Today, God has declared to all of us in His Son. Concerning this Son of God, what purpose does God have for Him? Here it tells us our God has established Him heir of all things. This is His beloved and only begotten Son, so before He created everything, He already set in His mind to create everything for His Son as inheritance. You see how honorable this Son is! Not only so, you can see that when He created, He created everything by His Son. Here it tells us that He made the worlds by Him. “The worlds” is a Jewish idiom that points to the world of the universe, not just pointing to the earth. Oh, brothers and sisters, God created the whole universe for His Son, and today He is to give everything in the universe to His Son. He is the only heir of the inheritance.

(3) The brightness of God's glory

Not only so, He said He is the brightness of God's glory. We cannot explain the glory of God. The Bible often mentions the glory of God. We can say the whole Bible is to let us see the glory of God, but we cannot explain it, for the glory of God is God Himself. We cannot measure this God, such a glorious God, and no one has ever seen His face. Moses once prayed, "May you let us see your glory." How did God reply? God said, "Whoever sees my face cannot live." (Exodus 33:20) There is no way for us to see the glory of God and remain alive, for God is so glorious. Yet, we thank and praise God. Here it tells us that Lord Jesus is the brightness of the glory. Just as we cannot see the sun. What we see is the brightness of the sun. If we cannot even directly stare at the brightness of the sun, how much more is the sun itself? God is so glorious, and He lives in light inaccessible to man. No one can see Him. No one can draw near to Him. He is unique. But today, the brightness of this glory is among us. Therefore, in 2 Corinthians 4:6, it says, "Because it is the God who spoke that out of darkness light should shine who has shone in our hearts for the shining forth of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Today, we have seen Christ Jesus, and the glory of God shines forth from His face. Therefore, brother T. Austin-Sparks once used a parable and said, "Our Lord is like a prism. When light shines through it, light is analyzed, and we can enjoy the many colors of light." So the Bible tells us, the Word became flesh and dwelt among men, full of grace and truth. This grace and truth is the brightness of glory of God shining forth. God is light, and Lord Jesus is full of truth. God is love, and Lord Jesus is full of grace. Therefore, our Lord has shown us the glory of God.

(4) The expression (true image) of His substance

Next, it says He is the expression of the substance of God. Before it says He is the brightness, not the glory, not the substance of God. Therefore, the Holy Spirit added a line to say that He is the expression of the substance of God. Concerning the substance of God, Lord Jesus is the expression (true image). In the original text, the word expression (image) means a sculpture by Greek artist, which was carved according to an object. In other words, whatever the substance of God is, Lord Jesus is of the same quality. Therefore, this word in Greek, especially in the context of the Book of Hebrews, is pointing to character. All the characters in God dwells bodily in Him, for He is God. This is our Lord Jesus.

(5) Upholding all things by the word of His power

He always upholds all things by the word of His power. All things were not only created by Him, but also established because of Him. What is He? He is the power that sustains all things. All things in the universe can be held together because of His word of authority. Therefore, I would use brother Austin-Sparks'

words again. He said when our Lord was crucified, the ground shook, and the sun darkened. Why? Because the sustaining power is on the cross. If a person leaves Lord Jesus Christ, he is scattered. If the whole universe leaves our Lord, the universe will be consumed, for He is the one who sustains all things.

(6) Redeeming our sins

Thank and praise God! Not only so, here it tells us that He has also redeemed us of our sins. Having made by Himself the purification of sins, (He) set Himself down on the right hand of the greatness on high. He redeemed our sins with the identity of the Son of God. Today, we have often twisted the gospel as we preach. We said that God is righteous, and He will judge our sins. Yet, Lord Jesus came to the world and bore our sins. So in our understanding, God is strict and furious, while Jesus is kind and merciful. And we also think God was unfair. How could God tell His Son to suffer for us like this? He had never sinned. But we need to know that He had cleansed our sins with the qualification of the Son of God. In other words, it was God Himself who washed our sins. God had not sacrificed someone else. God loves us, and He Himself came into His Son and redeem us of our sins. How great is God's love! For this reason, God raised Him up to the most high, and He is seated on the right hand of God today.

Acknowledge Lord Jesus, lest in any way we slip away

Brothers and sisters, this is our Lord Jesus. He is the Son of God. He is God. He is the heir of all things. He is the brightness of the glory of God. He is the expression of the substance of God. He sustains all things. He saves all people. This is our Lord Jesus. If you have truly see from within this glorious and honorable Lord, you cannot but bow down before Him and worship Him. Our Lord is worthy of our worship! Not only He is worthy of worship, He is worthy to be our Head. We magnify Him in all things and let Him be our lord and king. We should learn to obey His words. The author of the Book of Hebrews tells us that we should give heed more abundantly to things we have heard. What are the things we have heard? That is what was said in Chapter 1, that our Jesus is the Son of God. We have heard these words, and we should take heed, lest we slip away.

What does it mean to slip away? This is like a ship sailing to a harbor, but the wave and tide outside is high, and if it is not careful, the ship will follow the tide and drift out, and cannot enter into the harbor. Therefore, in the original text it carries the meaning of drifting and missing. If today we do not acknowledge this Lord, we will drift away, and we will miss and cannot arrive at the harbor. Today, many people have drifted away, and many people have missed. What's the reason? It is because they are not clear about the vision of Christ. They have seen a lot of things, but not the Lord Jesus. Dear brothers and sisters, "But we

see Jesus.” Apart from Lord Jesus, let us not see anything. Let us close our eyes and shut our ears, and be singled-minded to run towards our Lord.

(2) The Son of Man – The Word became flesh

(1) God’s purpose in the creation of man has never changed

Our Lord isn’t just the Son of God. In chapter 2 we see that He is also the Son of Man, the Word became flesh. At the beginning, God created man according to His own image. He gave all the authority on the earth to man. “The birds in the sky, the beasts on the land, and the fish in the water,” God said, “You shall rule over them. I give you the authority.” Because God created man for a glorious purpose: man shall be united with God, and man shall reign with God, and man shall be used by God to achieve His will. But unfortunately, man opposed God. As a result, man has fallen, losing the image of God, and losing the authority that God gives him as well. But God had not forsaken His original purpose on man, so after 3000 years, we see that in Psalms 8, God through David (who was also a prophet) told us, “What is man, that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels.” Because in (the order of) creation, man is one rank lower than the angels, but You have crowned him with glory and splendor. This is the original purpose of God toward man. After man has fallen for about 3000 years, God has not changed His will towards man. After another 1000 year, in the fullness of time, Lord Jesus was born of a woman, even under the Law, in order to save us who are under the Law to obtain sonship. Therefore, God’s original purpose towards man has never changed.

(2) He emptied Himself

Brothers and sisters, do you like to be a person? Often times people say they want to be an angel, but God does not save the angels. He only saves the descendants of Abraham. Sometimes I don’t want to be anything. I only want to be a bird, (I often had this thought when I was young) for I see the birds fly around freely. I so hoped to become a bird. But thank God, God made me a man. Since God has a glorious purpose on man, even though Adam failed, and the descendants of Adam failed, God sent His Son to be a man. Brothers and sisters, this is not a small matter, that God Himself would become a man. The Creator would come and become a created man! This omnipresent God would be limited inside the body of a man! This almighty God would come to the earth to become an infant and slowly grow up! This omniscient God would become a child and grow and learn slowly! That’s why Paul in Philippians 2 says, He did not esteem it an object of rapine to be on an equality with God. Yet, He emptied Himself. Oh, our God, the Son of God, has emptied all His honor, glory and abundance! Of course He could not empty His deity, for He is God, and He is God forever. Even

though He came to the earth to become man, He is still God. Yet, He forsook all the honor, glory, abundance, worship that is associated with God, and took the form of a slave.

(3) Taking the form of a slave

God is the sovereignty of the whole universe. If we ask, who has the power? Only God has the power. Do you have any power? If you compare with God, it just shows that God has power. He shows mercy to whoever He wills, and He shows grace to whoever He wills. Can you question God, Why do you do so? You don't have any power to say such thing. Whatever you say, God said I will do it this way, and it's done. This is our God. But when Lord Jesus came to the earth to become a man, He took the form of a slave. What is a slave? There is absolutely no status, and absolutely no power. He had become such a person, so before God He was obedient unto death, even death of the cross. Dear brothers and sisters, this was how our Lord became a man! Why did He have to do it this way? It is because He loves us. He know clearly whom we are, yet He still came to the earth to be a man because He loves us.

(4) Becoming the Son of Man – the beginning of a new mankind

He not only became man, the Bible tells us, He is the Son of Man. He often says, the Son of Man, the Son of Man, now what is the meaning of the Son of Man? Not only to say that He is a man, but there's also a meaning, that He is the beginning of a new mankind. He has not only come to the earth to be a man, He terminated the race of Adam, and started a new mankind. He is the Son of Man. Brothers and sisters, we are all dead in Adam, but we are all alive in Christ. We have all been redeemed through faith in Him. He not only has saved us, but will also lead us into glory.

Whenever we think about our Lord Jesus as the Son of Man, He is the lovely and approachable one. We think of Lord Jesus the Son of Man, how He had died for us and was resurrected for us. We who were dead in sins and trespasses, who were hopeless, were resurrected from the dead, and seated with Him in the heavenly. This was such a great salvation! Every time when we think about lord Jesus the Son of Man, we are attracted inside to draw near to Him and to trust Him. For He had not only forgiven our sins, He is to lead us into glory. He restores us to the original purpose of God towards man. These are all because of Him being the Son of Man. This is our Lord Jesus. This is His identity.

May He fill my heart

May we truly see Him from the depth of our spirit. We have seen our Lord as too small. We have seen our Lord as too low. May God open our hearts, so that we can see this Jesus in the heart of God. He is the Son of God. He came to the earth, and He is the Son of Man. Brothers and sisters, if you can see that such Jesus is the Jesus you believe, what else can seduce our hearts to depart from Him? What else is more precious than Him and cause us not to pursue Him? That's why Paul said, I count all things but dung, and I count Christ as treasure. And that's why the psalmist says, Whom have him in the heavens? And there is none upon earth I desire (besides Him). Our Lord is lovely and worthy of worship!

Prayer

Our Lord, how honorable You are! You are the Son of God, the only begotten Son. How lovely you are! You are man. You are the Son of Man. Our God, may you through your Holy Spirit, open the eyes of our hearts, that we may see your Son, so that our whole being is filled by your Son. Do not let any man, matter of things occupy our hearts. Only You are our all in all, for You alone are worthy. We worship you! We bless You! We love You! In the name of Lord Jesus, Amen.