

**HEBREWS**  
**(Lesson 3)**  
**Who Is This Man Jesus?**

Text: Hebrews 1:2, 3

**INTRODUCTION**

Muhammad Ali was a great boxing champion back in the sixties and seventies. And he became so famous that his name was known throughout the world. And he was perhaps more famous than any other sports figure of all time. He was more famous than the president of the United States. And some suggested at the time that he was more famous than Jesus Christ himself.

There have been human beings ever so often that have become famous throughout the world for one reason or another. But their fame is for a moment in history and then the knowledge of them fades away.

Muhammad Ali has now faded from the front pages of the sports section and children today may not even know who he was.

But there was a baby born in an animal shelter in Bethlehem 2000 years ago – and his name was Jesus. Now only a few magi and a few humble shepherds paid any attention to his birth. And for the first 30 years of his life he lived in virtual obscurity. There is only one account of his youth in the Scriptures. And it says when he was 12 years old he went to Jerusalem with his parents and he sat in the temple and astounded the religious doctors with his understanding of the Old Testament Scriptures.

But other than that, Jesus was virtually unknown until he began his public ministry when he was about 30 years old.

But when he began his ministry, he became instantly famous in Jerusalem and in Judea and Samaria and the uttermost parts of the known world. And he became famous partly because his ministry was attended and confirmed by astounding miracles.

He raised the dead. He healed the sick. He caused the blind to see and he healed the lame. He fed the multitudes with a basket of fishes. And his fame spread throughout the whole region.

Everywhere that Jesus went, thousands of people followed him. And he became perhaps the most famous person of his day.

Now I hope you understand that Jesus was a real historical person. He is not just a Santa Claus. He's not the Easter Bunny. He's not just a fairy tale or a concoction of the religious mind. But his presence on earth is

an historical fact.

Socrates (469 BC) and Plato (423 BC) were real persons. They were Classical Greek philosophers some 450 years before Jesus was born and they were real persons whose deeds and writings were recorded in history. Hippocrates was a famous Greek physician around the same time and he became known as the father of medicine. And he was a real person. Alexander the Great was born 350 years before Jesus and his exploits are recorded in the annals of history. And he was a real person. And some 300 years later Jesus was born. And the words and works of Jesus are recorded in historical writings. And there is no question that Jesus was a real human being.

It can hardly be disputed that of the hundreds of billions of human beings that have ever been born, Jesus is the most famous human being that has ever lived. During his lifetime, Jesus became famous in the known world at that time. And 2000 years later his name is still known in every corner of the world.

He affected the world like no other person who ever lived. Do you realize that he is the great divide of all of history? We count all the years before Jesus in terms of BC or "before Christ." And then Jesus was born and we call that Anno Domini or the year of our Lord. And we count the years after Jesus in terms of years AD. And we are living in 2011 AD.

Jesus so affected the world that the days and years of our calendar are measured around him.

With all other men, their fame burns for a short time and then it fades away. But the fame of Jesus has been worldwide for 2000 years. Jesus began with 11 disciples and his followers are now countless millions.

So, it is not a question of whether or not Jesus was a real person. That is documented as much as any other historical fact. It is merely a question of what we believe about this real person that matters.

The name of Jesus is acknowledged by almost every person on the face of the earth. Some spit the name of Jesus out daily as a curse word. But to others, his name is the most revered of all names. To some the name of Jesus leaves a bitter taste. To others it is sweeter than honey.

Some believe Jesus was merely an ignorant, religious fanatic while others believe him to be the wisest and truest of religious teachers. Some believe him to be the devil, while others believe him to be the Savior of the world.

One day, Jesus was gathered around some Jewish Pharisees and he posed the most penetrating and significant question of all time. Jesus asked them,

*What think ye of Christ?*

Matthew 22:42

That is the most crucial question that you will ever face in all your life. And the answer to that question will determine your eternal destiny. The most important question in all your life is not what career you choose or what house you buy or even who you marry but, the gravest question is, *What think ye of Christ?*

Now, let me say that I don't have the power to control what you think of Christ. All I can do is show you what the Scriptures say of Him and then, it is up to you. And you can believe it and order your life by it, or you can reject it and live as you please. And the consequences will be grave and eternal.

Now we have begun a series in the book of Hebrews and we have just started this great book. And I would like for you to turn to Hebrews chapter one and we are going to focus on the first three verses of chapter one.

Now you may remember that the great truth of the book of Hebrews is the excellency of the man Jesus and more specifically, it teaches that Jesus Christ is far superior to that old religion called Judaism.

Now Judaism was a true religion and it was a system of worship given by God to the nation Israel. And God gave the Jewish law through Moses, and it was the true religion for Israel before Jesus came. But this whole religious exercise called Judaism merely prefigured true worship which was to be found in Jesus and Jesus alone.

There were human priests under the law, but these human priests were only types of Christ who is the true mediator between God and man.

There were animals set aside for sacrifice under the law, but these animal sacrifices merely served as types and pictures of the true sacrifice of Christ. And so, the writer of Hebrews seeks to make it clear that Christianity is the true religion which Judaism merely prefigured.

But this morning, my intent is to show you what this passage of Scripture says about the man Jesus Christ. And I want you to think very carefully about this, because when you have heard what the Scriptures say about Jesus, the Spirit of God may then ask you, "What think ye of Christ?"

I. Jesus is God's Son.

*God . . . Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son. (v.1)*

In times past God spoke through prophets and angels. But, in these last days, he has spoken through someone better than mere prophets or angels. He has spoken through his Son.

In the Scriptures Jesus is called God's Son. In fact, in other places, he is called God's only begotten Son. And among other things, that means that Jesus is the only human being ever begotten by God. All other human beings were begotten by a human father. No so this man Jesus. He was begotten by God himself. And, he was the only one so begotten by God.

Now the human genealogy of Jesus beginning with Abraham is found in the first chapter of Matthew. And start is verse two where we see that Abraham begat Isaac. And Isaac begat Jacob. And Jacob begat Judas. And on and on it goes until verse 16 where it says Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary. But look! Joseph did not beget Jesus. It says, "Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus. Isn't the Bible extremely accurate down to the last detail! You see, Jesus was not begotten by Joseph, Jesus was God's only begotten Son.

Now Jesus is not a created being like all other human beings. Jesus is the self-existent One. And Luke, in the gospel of John, makes sure that we understand that Jesus was very God before he ever became a man. Look at John 1:1-3.

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

And Jesus was the eternal God in heaven before the world was created.

But in due time, at exactly the right time in history, Jesus became a man. And Mary, by the Holy Spirit, conceived and bore a son and she called his name Jesus. This was the only person in all of history who had no earthly father, but whose Father was God himself and he was the only one who was ever begotten by God. He is the only begotten Son.

And I ask you this morning, “*What think ye of Christ?*” Do you consider him a mere man, or is he God’s Son?”

The Scriptures say He is God’s Son. Now our text also says,

God made the worlds through him (v.2)

See how much greater Jesus is than the prophets. He is the one who made the worlds. (See John 1:3) Now it is very clear. The Scriptures claim that Jesus created all things. He created the earth and the heavens and all the universe. But this word in the greek text is aionas which could be translated ages. Not only did Jesus create the physical elements, but Jesus created the times and seasons. Jesus created the ages of history. That’s why he is able to predict the rise and fall of human kingdoms. It is because he has created them by his decree and he brings them to power in due time and he brings them to nothing in due time.

Who is this Jesus who was born in Bethlehem? He is the One who created the worlds out of nothing. And he is the One who planned and created the ages. Only a sovereign God can do such things.

But notice that Jesus does more than merely create all things.

Jesus upholds all things by the word of his power (v.3)

It was said in v.2 that he made the worlds. But now we have another statement which takes the majesty and power of this man Jesus to a whole new level.

Now it might be supposed in v. 2 that Jesus is merely the agent in creating as though Jesus acted almost like an angel or a minister. It says that God made the worlds by him. And of course we know from elsewhere

that Jesus created all things by his own power.

But in verse 3, we see that not only did Jesus create the world, but he upholds it and he upholds it by his own power. You see that it says he upholds all things by the word of his power. The greek word for “his” in verse 3 (hautos) means specifically “his own” and no one else’s power. (See Hebrews 3:6; “his own” house.) And so, Jesus upholds by his own power.

Notice what it is that Jesus upholds. He upholds all things. Now in the immediate context, it would seem that Jesus, by his own power, upholds first and foremost the worlds that he created. He spoke the worlds into existence. He hung the planets and the stars and the galaxies in their appointed places and by his own power he sustains them day after day.

Why does the physical universe hold its form year after year and century after century and millennium after millennium? Because Jesus upholds it.

According to the laws of science, the physical universe should ultimately fly into disorder.

There is a law of science that I encountered 40 years ago when I studied physics at the University of Memphis. It is called, The Second Law of Thermodynamics. And if I can summarize and simplify that law, it simply says, “In a closed system like our universe, things tend toward a state of disorder. (Also known as the law of entropy) Things tend to break down rather than to put themselves together.

**Example: If I take my watch off and put it in a shaker for a million years, it will surely fall all to pieces because things tend toward a state of disorder. But if I put all the pieces of a watch in a box and shake it for a million years it will never put itself together into a working timepiece.**

Things tend toward a state of disorder, not order. Science and common sense tell us that is true.

But, the immaculate order and complexity of our beautifully functioning universe has never disintegrated in thousands of years. The planets do not run into themselves. They don’t fly off course. They don’t

explode. The earth spins at a precise rate of speed such that we see the sun come up and go down at its appointed time each and every day.

Mr. Coleman was born nearly 95 years ago and the sun has never failed to rise in the east and set in the west. It is something that we can count on every day because Jesus sustains the universe.

But the sustaining power of Jesus goes beyond merely sustaining the orbs that inhabit the sky. Look at verse three. What is it that Jesus sustains? He sustains all things by his own power.

Arthur Pink, in his exposition of Hebrews, says that Jesus sustains “all things that are visible or invisible, in heaven and earth, or under the earth: all things, not only creatures, but all events.”

The greatness of Jesus is unimaginable even when we only consider that by his power he sustains the sun and the earth and the planets and stars. Just to do that is more than we can comprehend. But the power of Jesus goes far deeper in that he sustains all creatures in his worlds.

He sustains the angels and he sustains each and every human being and he sustains the animals and all living creatures.

**Example: My sister-in-law, Missy, is visiting with us this morning. And she had to put their little beagle to sleep this past week. Lucy was her name. And it was Jesus that created Lucy and it was Jesus that gave Lucy life for nine years. And it was Jesus who appointed the times and seasons of her life. And Jesus sustained Lucy’s little animal life for all those years.**

I suspect that without the power of Jesus all life would cease to exist because Hebrews says, “Jesus upholds all things.” Life itself is a very fragile thing and it hangs by a thread each and every day. And were it not for the power of Jesus, all life would be unsustainable.

He breathed in Adam’s nostrils and Adam became a living soul. And Jesus sustained Adam’s life day after day by his own power. There are thousands of things that could go wrong with our bodies each day. It is the greatest machine ever made, but every machine needs constant maintenance. And, Jesus is the one who upholds all things by his own

power.

But the upholding power of Jesus is not limited to the physical universe and to his creatures. The sustaining power of Jesus extends to all events that transpire in the universe. Nothing happens outside the control of Jesus - for He is the upholder of all things. Nothing slips through his hands, nothing happens by accident, for Jesus upholds all things.

Now to us, without faith in Him, life seems like a series of arbitrary and chance events. But by faith we believe that Jesus upholds all things by his own power.

Jesus controls the rolling of the dice.

*The lot is cast into the lap; But the whole disposing thereof is of Jehovah.*

Prov. 16:33

Jesus controls the lightning.

*He covereth His hands with the lightening, And giveth it a charge that it strike the mark.*

Job 36:32

If you shoot an arrow into the air, Jesus controls where the arrow will strike by his own power. If you flip a coin, Jesus determines whether it comes up heads or tails.

And his power goes even deeper. Jesus determines whether you shoot the arrow or whether you flip the coin. Nothing is outside his control and his power. We call that the absolute sovereignty of God over all things.

And so, it says Jesus upholds all things by his own power.

Now the word “uphold” might lead you to believe that Jesus is just there supporting the universe in case something might go wrong.

**Example: Have you ever seen a father helping his little boy learn to ride a bike. He takes the training wheels off and he runs alongside the bike steadying his son and making sure there is no crash.**

And that is one sense of upholding. But this word “upholding” means more than that. It means “to energize” or “impel.” The idea is that Jesus, by his own power, pushes the universe forward. He keeps the worlds spinning. He keeps creatures breathing. He keeps events unfolding as they should to accomplish his purposes. And he does it not with a passive upholding, but with an active influence. (See 2 Pet.1:21 where the same word – phero- is used.)

And so, when it says that Jesus upholds all things, the word means that Jesus moves all things, by his own power, in its appointed direction.

This is the baby who was born in Bethlehem. And this is the One who shook the world 30 years later in his public ministry. This is the One who became the most famous human being of all time. This is the One by whom we devise our historical calendar. He became a real human being. And the Scriptures say that Jesus upholds all things by his own power.

But I ask each and every one of you, “What think ye of Christ?”

But our passage says much more about Jesus. Look in verse 3, it says,

Jesus is the brightness of his glory

Now the prophets in the Old Testament were not the brightness of God’s glory. But Jesus is the brightness of his glory. And here is what that means. To look at Jesus is to see the Father. (John 14:9) Now no one has seen God the Father. But our text says that Jesus is the resplendent outbeaming of the glory of the Father.

**Example: You can’t see the sun. If you look up for a moment you can see a very bright light, but what you are seeing is the brightness of the sun. What we see are light rays beaming out from the sun. Now that brightness is not the sun itself, but it is the glory of the sun. The sun puts out light and heat. And this light and heat is the glory of the sun.**

And Jesus is the brightness of the glory of the Father. What the Father is shines forth in the person of Jesus. And we see the glory of the Father in Jesus. We would not know a lot about the Father except that we

have now seen Jesus and now we know what the Father is like.

Take a look at Jesus. Is he merciful? Then we know that the Father is merciful.

Does Jesus love little children? Then we know that the Father loves little children.

Does Jesus love widows and orphans? Then so does the Father.

Does Jesus forgive sinners? Then, the Father forgives sinners.

You see, this baby born in Bethlehem was a real person named Jesus. And we could see him and touch him. And we could watch him and we could talk to him.

And he was the effulgence of the glory of God. Every attribute of God the Father was also in God the Son – goodness and kindness, mercy and longsuffering were all found in full measure in Jesus. The Bible says he was full of grace and truth. His perfections shined forth and we saw the brightness of the glory of God. And we knew the Father because we beheld his Son Jesus.

And Hebrews says that Jesus was the brightness of God's glory.

How could there possibly be more to say about Jesus? He was God's only Son. He created the worlds. He upholds all things by his own power. He is the brightness of God's glory.

But, lest there be any diminishing of this man Jesus, let it be known that,

Jesus is the express image of God's person

Jesus is the express image of the Father. See Col.1:15.

*Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature.*

In other words, to look at Jesus, is to look at God. He is the express image. God himself has become a man. And now, finally, we can look at

him and see God. There is nothing in Jesus that is not like the Father. He is the express image.

**Example: When you look in the mirror every morning, you see an image of yourself. Like it or not, this is what you look like! And Jesus was the express image of God.**

**Example: I have a stamp in my desk drawer that is an exact replica of my signature. And when I ink it up, and press it on a piece of paper, my signature and no one else's signature appears.**

And Jesus is God's exact signature upon this world. And that is because Jesus and the Father are one. They are one in essence. They are the very same in nature. What Jesus says is what the Father says. And what Jesus does is what the Father does.

And when Mary cradled her child, she cradled the express image of the Father. And when she held this real human being in her arms, she held God himself.

See how majestic the Scriptures are in speaking of Jesus. The Scriptures scream loud and clear that Jesus is the express image of the Father.

I must go on quickly and tell you more about Jesus.

### Jesus purged our sins

This work of Jesus, this work of purging our sins, is a glorious and stupendous work to be compared with making the worlds and sustaining the worlds. Here is the greatness of Jesus: He made the worlds. He sustains the worlds. And he purged our sins. These are three works that can only be performed by God.

Now let me quickly make a few points about this statement that he purged our sins.

1. This speaks to the great filth of sin.

**Example: My wife on a daily and a weekly basis goes around purging our house. Everyone in our household is male. We mess it up day after day. We track in dirt. We make messes. We leave things out of place. But every week she purges that house from top to bottom. Now if the house never got dirty, then she would not need to clean. The fact that she cleans would suggest that the house was dirty.**

And the fact that Jesus purged our sins speaks to the fact that we were filthy. We were filthy dirty because of sin. And I think we can't even comprehend the depth of our filthiness.

**Example: Us men sometimes are that way, aren't we? We don't see the dirt. We think things are clean when they are really filthy. As long as we can't see the dishes over the rim of the sink, it seems clean to us. And I never reach up to see if there is dust on top of the door facings. But a woman sees that dirt everywhere. And if she can't see the top of the door facings, she knows it's there anyway.**

And Jesus saw our utter filth because of sin.

You see, the Bible says there is none righteous, no not one. And Jesus saw that filth of sin, and he did a work of redemption that purged our sins.

2. The purging was accomplished once for all.

Now this word purged in our text is in the aorist tense in the Greek which means it was a one-time act. It was not like the purifications in times past, when they repeated the rituals day after day. But the redeeming work of Jesus was done once for all on Calvary.

That's why it says, "When he had by himself purged our sins."

What an efficient sacrifice he made for sins. It was not necessary for him to die year after year. One death was efficient for all the sins of the world forever. And they were efficient for my sins and your sins.

See how much better the sacrifice of Jesus is than the sacrifices in times past? But look,

3. The work of redemption was done by Jesus alone.

There were no priests to assist him in the work. There were no other sacrifices that added to his sacrifice. There was no other altar besides the cross. There were no angels, nor any other man that could assist him in performing this work of redemption. He did it by himself. (v.3)

Remember, his disciples fled. Peter denied him. Judas betrayed him. And Jesus, all alone, was turned over to sinful men for crucifixion and for the purging of sins.

But let me show you more. Our text says that,

Jesus sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high

1. Notice the high exaltation of Jesus after he purged our sins.

There is no higher position than this. This is a place of honor above all other places. He is on the right hand of the Father. He has been confirmed in his rightful place high above all principality and power. And all of this, only after he purged our sins.

This gives us great confidence because he is at the right hand of God serving as mediator between God and man. And he argues on our behalf each day reminding the Father that he has purged our sins.

2. He sat down.

A. Sitting denotes settled continuance.

**Example: When I have mowed the yard and raked the leaves and edged the bushes and cleaned the pool and done everything that my wife commanded me to do then I come in and turn the ballgame on and sit down in my chair. What does that mean? That means I intend to stay there a while.**

And when Jesus sat down at the right hand of God, it shows his intent to stay there. His redemptive work is perfect and complete. It lacks nothing. It is very sufficient to save us all to the uttermost. It is sufficient to save you from the horrendous guilt of sin. And it is sufficient to save you from the pollution of sin. And it is sufficient to move you from condemnation to justification. It is sufficient to move you from the torment of hell to the joys of heaven, because Jesus finished his work and he sat down.

B. Sitting denotes rest.

Jesus has ceased his sacrificial service and his sufferings. He will never suffer again. He will never die for sins again. He has purged our sins and his work is done. And so, he sat down at the right hand of God.

Now you know that the tabernacle in the Old Testament was a place where earthly priests did earthly religious services and offered earthly purifications and earthly sacrifices and all of this was a picture of the true way of salvation in Christ. And did you know that there were no chairs in the tabernacle? There was no place for priests to sit down because their work was never completed. Their work was continual and never ceasing because their work did not purge sins forever.

But Jesus finished his work and cried, "It is finished." And he sat down at the right hand of God because his redemptive work was done.

Now you should know one more thing about this man Jesus.

God has appointed him heir of all things

Now this is a difficult concept. We know that Jesus is God himself and in his divinity he created all things. And therefore in his divinity he owns all things and it is difficult to conceive of him then being an heir of all things which he already owns.

However, this passage speaks of Jesus the man. Never before had a man been heir of all things. But now, God has highly exalted a man, the man Christ Jesus. And Jesus has been appointed heir of all things. Now Jesus, by virtue of being the Creator, was always owner of all things in his divinity. But he became a man in time. And when he completed his earthly work, the Father appointed him, in his humanity, as heir.

Now, notice the extent of his heirship. He is appointed heir of all

things. Now there was a time during his humanity that he was the poorest of the poor. He had nothing and he died with nothing. He was buried in another man's tomb. But God raised him up and has appointed him heir of all things. He is heir to every physical thing in the universe. He owns the earth, the moon and all the planets. He owns the stars. He owns all the galaxies that were ever created and they reach farther than we can see or imagine. But he is also heir to every living creature. All angels and all human beings will bow down and call him Lord either willingly or by compulsion. All glory is bestowed on Jesus in his divinity and now in his humanity. And he is appointed heir of all things.

Never was a man so poor and yet made so rich. We cannot imagine the extent of his riches. He can command whatever he wishes. Eternal wealth and joy is his in his dominion over all things.

And I remind you that according to Romans 8:16, 17 we, if so be that we believe on him, are joint heirs with Christ. You see, if you belong to Christ, then he is your substitute. He was your substitute when he suffered and paid the penalty for sin. You deserved to pay for your own sins, but if you believe on Him, then his sufferings count for you. And if he is your substitute in his sufferings, then he is also your substitute in his immeasurable wealth. His suffering was our suffering and his wealth is our wealth. When he was appointed heir of all things, we became rich beyond imagination.

## CONCLUSION

You have seen this morning what the Scriptures say about Jesus. And I conclude this message by asking you what you say about Jesus. For the answer to this question is life and death.

The Scriptures say, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

Jesus said,

*Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

*Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*