

Text: Heb. 1:1-3

Title: "Hearing from the one who is a Son"

Time: Sunday, March 2, 2014 pm

Place: NBBC

Introduction: I am reading a biography of Carl McIntire that was written by two ladies who knew him and worked alongside of him. I have found the volume helpful and informative. I learned in that work that Carl McIntire has a son, a historian who teaches History at the University of Toronto. His name is C.T. McIntire (Carl Thomas), and as I have read the book I have often thought how interesting it would be to be able to speak to this son about the events I am reading. That would be a unique perspective on the material in the biography.

It is the fact that God has allowed us to know the unique perspective of His Son in the revelation of Himself to man that has the author of Hebrews thrilled at the beginning of this important book. He wants us to know how wonderful it is that we have heard, not simply from prophets, or from angels, or from mere man, but from the one who is a Son. I have titled the message this evening, "Hearing from the one who is a Son," and I want to say five things about this.

I. Hearing the Son means hearing a more complete revelation from God (vv. 1-2a).

Illustration: My daughter won the regional final for girls' basketball in the NEACS yesterday. My wife and I were unable to attend the game, so we found out about it via text messages from some friends. We first got a picture from a friend named Debbie Andrews that showed Kara cutting down the nets. Then we had a text message from Brandon on a friend's cell phone saying that the girls had won. I

texted back my congratulations, but then got a confusing text back that said they had not won anything. It was not until the kids came home and we could speak to them in person that we got a full confirmation that Kara's school had won and a full description of how the game went.

Application: That experience parallels how God's revelation has come to man. God has not been silent; He has spoken (agnosticism is disallowed). He did so in two phases: (1) "to the fathers by the prophets in many parts and in many ways in old time"; and (2) "in these last days to us by a Son."

Clearly, we have it better than the fathers did. What they got was piecemeal revelation. Each piece they received came to them like so many pieces of a puzzle that still had to be put together. Even the inspired prophets who spoke the word to the fathers were not sure about how all the pieces of this revelation fit together (1 Pet. 1:10).

Not so for us. Now that the one who is a Son has come, God has spoken to us in person, and so we have a revelation from God that is complete and clear in a way unknown to the Old Testament believer. You and I are more privileged than Adam, than Seth or Noah or Shem, than Abraham or Isaac or Jacob, than Moses or Joshua or Samuel, than David or Solomon, than Elijah or Elisha, than Isaiah or Jeremiah or Ezekiel.

We are more privileged than any of these, because in these last days, God has spoken to us by a Son. Our New Testaments tell us of Him and give us the completed revelation that illuminates all that is dark in the Old Testament. We are incredibly privileged to be spoken to this way.

So are we listening to what He has to say? Do we spend time with the revelation of Him, learning at His feet? Or do we take the enormous privilege that we have as the recipients of His revelatory ministry and respond with neglect and indifference? God has spoken to us by a Son – are we listening?

II. Hearing the Son means hearing the heir of all things (v. 2b, “whom He hath appointed heir of all things”).

Illustration: Who ought to inherit what can often be a messy battle in human courts of law. I read yesterday about a long court battle over the estate of the wealthiest woman in Asia, a Hong Kong lady who died of ovarian cancer and left behind assets worth \$4.1 billion. She was a real estate tycoon, and the estate went to court because a man who was known as a feng shui master was listed by the will as the sole heir of this fortune. Feng shui is an Asian system for organizing building plans according to optimal chi. The family sued in behalf of their charitable foundation and finally won the inheritance back.

Application: Well, there is no such messy court battle here when it comes to this heir. He is appointed by God as the heir of all things, including that \$4.1 billion of real estate assets in Hong Kong. This is in keeping with what God had told the fathers by the prophets (Ps. 2:7-8).

The Son owns absolutely everything, and He is soon to come into complete and unrivaled possession of it. God has spoken to us by a Son whom He has appointed the heir of all things. We should listen to the one who speaks as the heir of all things, because we are part of the all things He has inherited. He owns us; He owns everything we have;

He owns everything we think we own. God has spoken by Him. Are we listening?

III. Hearing the Son means hearing the maker and sustainer of all things (v. 2c, “by whom also He made the worlds”; v. 3b, “upholding all things by the word of His power”).

Illustration: Why is the universe pulling apart at ever increasing speeds? Scientists say that it must be dark energy, but they do not know what they speak of when they say that. What accounts for the gravitational properties of observable matter? Scientists say that it must be dark matter, but they do not know what they speak of when they say that. What produces a supernova? Scientists do not know. Where do cosmic rays come from? Why is our solar system so unique? Why is our planet so unique? How does the atmosphere of the sun stay 10.8 million degrees Fahrenheit? Scientists do not know.

Application: There is a lot about what is called here “the world” and “all things” that the smartest human beings simply do not know. They cannot even imagine feasible answers to these mysteries. But although we may not know scientific answers to the question *why?* when it comes to these things, we do have a theological one to these and every other question science has ever asked – the Son made it and He sustains it.

He made the worlds, and he upholds them (i.e. carries them along). He is making sure that the score or so of physical constants required to sustain life in our universe are staying constant. He keeps the atoms together, the compounds compounded, and the stars in their place. He is stretching out the heavens by Himself and feeding each hungry creature the meal he has eaten today. He is responsible for the unique design of the 8.7 million known animal species on

the earth. And he is responsible for the design of the other 80% or so that scientists believe to be out there somewhere still undiscovered. Each one is fearfully and wonderfully made by Him, and carefully and thoroughly cared for by the word of His power. God spoke to us in these last days by Him. Are we taking the time to listen?

IV. Hearing the Son means seeing a perfect revelation of God's own nature (v. 3a, "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person").

Illustration: My wife and I celebrated our 25th anniversary this past year with a stay at the Seaport Hotel in Boston. As we drove up to the hotel, we could tell that we were in for a treat. One of the things the towering building on the shore seemed to promise was a sweeping view of the beautiful harbor and ocean. When we got in our room, however, we found that we had a beautiful view of the next door office building, and that we could only see a sliver of the sweeping beautiful view we wanted to see.

Application: It is God's desire as He speaks to man that man have a beautiful sweeping view of His glory and His nature, and hearing the one who is a Son makes this more possible than ever before. The author expresses this truth with two pictures that describe the Son of God:

1. The Son is the brightness of God's glory. What sunshine is to the sun, the Son of God is to the glory of God. God's glory shines bright in the nature and work of His Son, Jesus Christ, in the sense that it makes that glory bright and clear and visible to us.
2. The Son is the express image of God's nature (*person* is a later meaning of the Greek word here). Each of us was made in God's image, but the Son is the express image of God's nature. We get our word *character* from this Greek

word translated *express image*, and it is a word that means *impress* (used only here in the NT).

I have a stamp I use to endorse NRBFC checks. It says "For Deposit Only" on it, and when I use it on the back of a check, the back of the check says the exact same thing. The point of our author here is that there is a perfect correspondence between the nature of God and the being of the Son. I was made in the image of God, but you can find all kinds of differences between me and God. You cannot find those differences between the Son and God. He is everything it takes to exactly correspond to God's nature.

Application: All this means that we should look to Him and expect to see God's glory and God's nature. We get a sense for how important this is when we read this same vocabulary in a description of what is the supreme goal of the god of this world in 2 Cor. 4:4. Christ is the light of God, and the god of this world wants to blind the minds of men and women so that they cannot see that light.

This is the difference between having your affections set on things above and having them set on things of the earth (Col. 3:1-2). The god of this world will let us see the glory of winning a basketball game, but he wants to blind us to what can be seen of the glory and nature of God in Christ.

This is why so many have odd ideas about who and what God is (an old man upstairs, etc.). Have we seen the light of the glory of God in the person of Christ today? Has the duplication of the very nature of God we see in Christ smitten you with awe at all today? Have you been blinded to these grand views, which the Lord has intended for us to see in Christ? These views are the key to our spiritual strength (Eph. 3:16-17a).

V. Hearing the Son means hearing our Priest and King (v. 3c).

Application: It is significant to the theology of Hebrews that the Son sits down (8:1, 10:11-12, 12:2). In Hebrews, the act of sitting down is related to Christ's ministry to us as our Priest and our King.

1. He sits down as our Priest because the purification is totally complete. As indicated in chapter 10, the priesthood of the Old Testament temple worship never really had a chance to sit down. They offered sacrifices continually. See Psalm 134 and Lev. 6:8-13. Their work was never done because it never took away sins – it only pointed forward to the one who would make a cleansing of sin and then sit down. This was Jesus. He made purification for the filth of our sins by becoming that sin and by Himself lying down on the altar of sacrifice. That work is complete. There is nothing left to be done, not for Him and certainly not for us.

2. He sits down as our King because He sits on a throne. He does so in fulfillment of what was spoken of God to the fathers by the prophets in Psalm 110. He sits down on this throne, waiting for the day that His enemies shall have become the footstool for His feet.

Conclusion: God has spoken to us by the one who is a Son, who is our Priest and King. What does the Priest say in God's behalf? You are purified from sin! Can you hear Him? Do you believe Him? What does the King say in God's behalf? Follow me! Are you listening? Are you obeying?

“A man came – I think it was actually in Philadelphia – on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, ‘Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.’ That is the distinction – the sermon, and the ‘lightning and the thunder.’ To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters.”

– David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

Preachers and Preaching