

# JESUS, THE SON

By Rev. Will Nelken

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The first book of the Bible, Genesis, starts with these words: *“In the beginning, God...”* There was nothing else before this. There was no one else before this. Everything we know and can know came from God. The New Testament writer to the Hebrews takes a similar position.

*<sup>1</sup> God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, <sup>2</sup> 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; <sup>3</sup> 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, <sup>4</sup> having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.* (Hebrews 1:1-4; NKJV)

This passage begins with the word, “God.” There is no attempt to prove His existence. It is simply assumed and recognized. Some celebrities and politicians and scientists deny the existence of God, as though their opinion on the subject was significant. But who are they really? God thought so little of their claims and arguments that He simply ignored them completely. Perhaps they should consider the question God put to Job at the peak of his self-assertions: *“Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?”* (Job 38:4) According to this same writer, *“Anyone who wants to come to God must believe that He exists.”* (Hebrews 11:6)

The second thing this writer asserts is that God has spoken. From the elements of nature itself, an observant and thoughtful person will conclude that the One who created all this is Himself masterfully intelligent. It would seem only fitting that He would attempt to communicate with those creatures to whom He gave the gifts of speech and understanding.

God has communicated in a variety of ways: words of guidance and of warning, promises and instructions, dreams and visions, rituals and ceremonies, poetry, song, and prophecies. *“Here a little and there a little,”* (Isaiah 28:10) in all these ways, through many different people, spanning over a thousand years. Then, for about four hundred years, silence. Finally, He broke the silence, as we have been told, *“in these last days [He] has spoken to us in His Son.”*

That’s why I have no spiritual interest in the words of the Koran or Science and Health or the Book of Mormon or the Urantia Book. People’s empty speculations about words and principles, their endless theories and postulations of life’s purpose and practice, have no more attraction for me, since I met the Son. Everything God has ever had to say to humankind has been embodied in Jesus, the Son of God.

What’s more, in the original language of this letter, it does not actually say “in His Son” or “in the Son” or even “in a Son”; it simply says, *“in Son.”* This is how God has spoken to us for our day and our generation. His emphasis is not on the *person* of Jesus Christ, but on the *character* and *relationship* of Christ — sonship.

Who is this Son? What has God spoken to us “in Son”? The writer reveals nine glorious truths.

## **1. “Whom He appointed heir of all things.”**

If you’ve ever wondered what is going to happen in the future... God declares *“the end from the beginning.”* (Isaiah 46:10) If you’ve wondered what will become of the United States or Europe or Africa...? It will all become the property of Jesus Christ! He is going to get it all. And this even includes Venus and Jupiter and every star and every galaxy. They will all be His. Everything seen and unseen. *“The kingdoms of this world [will] become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!”* (Revelation 11:15)

*“Alleluia! For the Lord God omnipotent reigns!”* (Revelation 19:6)

## **2. “Through whom also He made the worlds.”**

Paul wrote: *“For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.”* (Colossians 1:16)

The original word for “worlds” was *aion*, from which we get the word eon. This refers not to the physical worlds, but to the ages of time, through which our worlds pass. This, too, should provide us great comfort and assurance, because it means that the course of things is not haphazard; it is following a set course. We’re on a cosmic road trip, we’re not in a runaway vehicle. God is the Navigator and Driver. Our destination is secure. He has everything well in hand.

## **3. “Who being the brightness of His glory.”**

“Brightness” means outshining overflow. *“God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ”* (Colossians 1:19). The glory of God is more than we could ever behold — a consuming fire. The Bible says that no one may see God and survive (Exodus 33:20). John wrote, *“No one has ever seen God. But the unique One, who himself is God, is near to the Father’s heart. He has revealed God to us.”* (John 1:18) We see Jesus... He is the outshining, the visible aspect of Almighty God. When you have seen the Son, you have seen the Father (John 14:9).

And what you see is His glory. It’s a word that originally meant “heavy.” It refers to the awesomeness of God. His majestic splendor. And the brightest part of that is Jesus!

## **4. “Being... the express image of His person.”**

“Express image” comes from the Greek word *charakter*. Clearly, it identifies where the image of God may be found in a person: in their character. This word was used to describe a wax seal, impressed by an engraved ring, such as might seal an official document. The impression in the wax was identical to the seal that made it. Jesus is the exact image of God because He *is* God, imprinted in human form. He is God manifest in the flesh.

Paul declared: *“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.”* (Colossians 1:15)

## **5. “Who... [is] upholding all things by the word of His power.”**

He not only made everything, but He sustains everything and holds it all together. As Paul put it, *“He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together”* (Colossians 1:17).

This is more amazing than it first sounds, for everything in this world, from the atomic level, *should be* flying apart, since like particles repel each other. Instead, *Something* holds them together, forming our material world. Nuclear power is the result of breaking the glue that naturally holds atomic particles together, releasing their “pent up” energy.

Jesus is holding all things together *“by the word of His power.”* Without His constant supervision and power, the universe would come unglued. When He who upholds all things removes His hand, then what Peter predicted will come to pass: *“The heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.”* (2 Peter 3:10)

## **6. “He... by Himself purged our sins.”**

This mighty God became a man, dwelling within the world He had made, in order to offer His human life for the salvation of humanity. *“Through Him God reconciled everything to Himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ’s blood on the cross.”* (Colossians 1:20)

Our selfishness, rebellion, and disobedience have earned us a terrible penalty: everlasting death (separation from God and all that is good). “By Himself” Jesus paid the debt that we owed by taking our place when He died on the cross. Our judgment, our penalty was meted out on Him.

For all those who entrust themselves to this wonderful Savior, He purges their sins — cancelling their judgment, erasing their stain, and breaking their power. *“He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach.”* (Colossians 1:22)

No one else has done this. No one else *could* do this. Only Holy-God-in-human-form could provide *“so great a salvation”* (Hebrews 2:3)!

### **7. “He... sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”**

Jesus did not “purge our sins” in a concluding sacrificial act, ending the story on a dark note. Once He had fully paid the price we owed, God raised Him from the dead and He will never die again. Not only this, but God also brought Him back to Heaven, from where He had come, and when He had returned, *“God elevated him to the place of highest honor and gave him the name above all other names.”* (Philippians 2:9)

When a worker sits down, it signifies that his job has been completed. Jesus finished His work.

When a king sits down, it is to take His seat of authority. Jesus is now ruling the universe as King of kings and Lord of lords.

### **8. “He... [became] so much better than the angels.”**

For a time, God’s Son became lower than the angels, taking upon Himself the form of a man. And *“when He appeared in human form, He humbled Himself in obedience to God and died a criminal’s death on a cross”* (Philippians 2:7-8). But, as a result of His righteous sacrifice, He is now *“crowned with glory and honor.”*

Some people make so much of angels. While I do not make *little* of them — for they are righteous, obedient servants of God, far greater in power and strength than any human — yet they are not gods to be worshiped or prayed to. Why should we seek their favor, when Jesus is so much better than they are? They do His bidding, for Jesus is Lord. I will pray to Him and worship Him alone.

### **9. “He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name.”**

Jesus was not only “made better than the angels,” but He was given a “more excellent name,” meaning greater authority and power and recognition. *“That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”* (Philippians 2:10-11)

His is the greater name, the saving name. That is why *“everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”* (Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21; Romans 10:13)

His followers have been authorized to use His name in the pursuit of His will. Jesus said, *“These signs will accompany those who have believed in My name; they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues; they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover,”* and *“You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it, so that the Son can bring glory to the Father. Yes, ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it!”* (John 14:13-14)

This is Jesus, God’s Son. He is God’s Living Word to us. The message He brings to us may be summarized in this way: God, who made us and sustains us, has also shown us His glory and character in Jesus, who died for us and now ever lives to intercede for us, and who is worthy to receive our worship and allegiance.

This news, if you truly believe it, should transform you in at least three ways.

## Transformed Worship

First, it should transform your worship. No one worships what they do not esteem, so, if you know these things, it should release praise in your life. However, many people fall into the rut of “worshipping” by simply stating what they know — like declaring a creed. Rote declarations are useful, but the more rote they become, the less worship they engage. For true worship expresses not only your mind and thoughts but also your heart and feelings.

Speaking to the Samaritan woman at the well, Jesus said, *“You Samaritans know very little about the one you worship, while we Jews know all about him, for salvation comes through the Jews. But the time is coming—indeed it’s here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way. For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth”* (John 4:22-24).

When you express your love to the Lord, you are to do so with *“all your heart, and all your mind, and all your strength”* (Matthew 22:37).

## Transformed Prayer

Second, it should transform your praying. Nobody prays to one they do not trust, for there is a difference between uttering prayers and praying. You may have uttered a prayer as a test, but when you trust, then your prayer takes on the character of genuine, heartfelt conversation.

Precisely because Jesus holds *“all authority in heaven and in earth,”* you should pray to Him about everything. Pray to Him when you are certain of what He wants and pray to Him when you don’t have a clue.

Because it is He who forgives all your sins, pray to Him when you are feeling your worst, as well as when you are feeling your best.

Because His is the most powerful name in the universe, don’t hesitate to use it. Remember, if you’re a “card-carrying” Christian (a submitted believer), you are permitted to call on His name and promised a response.

## Transformed Witness

Third, it should transform your witnessing. You represent Someone who is worthy of your love, Someone who is faithful to His word, Someone who is able and willing to help. So, don’t just talk about the Bible, tell about Jesus. Don’t just quote Scripture (though that is vital, for it is God’s word), but tell about Jesus’ relationship with you.

Concentrate on what you know by personal experience. What you’ve heard or read from others is okay, but not nearly as persuasive as what you yourself have discovered. And don’t be afraid to put your heart into it. Witnessing is not a stage show, but if it is your own experience, be expressive, be persuasive, be thoroughly real.

Peter wrote to us: *“Do not be frightened.” But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect”* (1 Peter 3:14-15).

If you really get to know the Son — each day and every day — your life will never become stagnant, but will be filled with His presence, equipped with His power, and effective for His purpose.