

No Ordinary Child

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[0 : 00] All right, well, take your Bibles this morning and open them, if you would, to Hebrews.

Hebrews chapter 1, and I'm going to be reading verses 1 through 4. Do that here in just a moment. Hebrews 1, and our text is verses 1 through 4, though I really will read a little bit more than that kind of as we go along.

I'm probably not the only preacher who enjoys this time of the year, that is, enjoys preaching this time of the year, and primarily because the subject is so special, and I love Christmas, the Christmas season anyway.

But to preach on the subjects that are indicative of this season are very enjoyable. And, you know, regardless of what Christmas has become in our American culture, we can bemoan that and have a reason to kind of bemoan what Christmas has become in our culture.

But regardless of that, it is still about the birth of a child. And it is still, even more than that, about the first coming of the Christ, Messiah, into the world.

[1 : 33] And Christmas is still about the Savior, the Savior's birth, and all the implications of that. And so I have said this often, that makes Christmas uniquely and even unalterably Christian in its origin.

And we should never, ever forget that. Even though, again, regrettably, it has become really, in many ways, non-Christian in its substance.

Its substance and also its celebration. And that's a sad thing, isn't it? And I don't want you to get me wrong. I'm not opposed to Christmas trees.

I like Christmas trees. You know, I know there are some in Christian circles who think we ought not to do that. And if that's you, then okay. But I like Christmas trees and the decorations on them and the lights and so forth.

I like holly and mistletoe, you know, under which guys trick the gals into a kiss. And nothing wrong with that, unless, of course, the gal's not your wife.

[2 : 44] You don't want to do that. I would never recommend that. I also have no problem with Jingle Bells, the song. I don't have any problem with that.

And Jingle Bells and, you know, White Christmas and, you know, Sleigh Bells. And I don't have any problem with those carols.

And this will probably get me into trouble with some. But I don't have a really big problem with old Saint Nick. It goes by some other names, of course. As long as we understand that he is a symbol, a symbol of gift giving.

And certainly not the Savior. And also, as long as we understand that he's not the real gift giver.

And, you know, we're not going to talk about Santa Claus here this morning. But I love decorations and the lights and, you know, all those trappings that have become pretty much the mainstay for this holiday, this season.

[3 : 56] And I like the buying of gifts and the giving of gifts and the receiving of gifts. Especially I like that. Amen. Some of you like that, too.

Though it's better to give than to receive, right? And it is. There's always more joy in that part of it. And I certainly have no problem with, you know, the food that goes along with this holiday.

And whether it's turkey. Of course, turkey we associate with Thanksgiving. But we eat turkey at Christmastime or ham or other kinds of meats. And pumpkin pie is still very appropriate for this time of the year.

And other delectable desserts and Christmas cookies and such. And I shouldn't get off on that subject. But nothing wrong with drinking eggnog if you like that kind of stuff.

And as long as it's the non-alcoholic kind. There's also nothing wrong with roasting chestnuts on an open fire.

[4 : 57] Nothing wrong with the song itself. And also nothing wrong if you want to roast them. Though I've never, ever done that in my life. But it just kind of goes along with this season.

And I don't have a problem with those things. And all of these things, most of these things, and other things that I could mention. You know, they just go with this season.

They make us feel good and warm. And, you know, those kind of things. And I love that part of the Christmas holiday. And there's nothing wrong with doing these things.

Nothing wrong that is. So long as you make your greatest part of your celebration the birth of Christ. The birth of the Savior. But let's admit this at least. That you can, if you want to, exclusively celebrate the birth of Jesus here during the Christmas season.

[5 : 56] This Christmas time. And still miss the full significance of that event. You can miss that. You know, Jesus' birth is merely the beginning of the story.

And we all know that, don't we? We know that. And yet we can make the mistake and not, in our thinking, go further than just the birth of the Savior.

It's the beginning of the story. And, you know, many people today will believe in and even to some extent celebrate the birth of Jesus. And yet, at the same time, totally disregard everything else the Bible says about Jesus.

That baby that was born in Bethlehem. And the reason, I think, is that many people today actually refuse to see more than just the birth of Jesus.

They don't want to see any more than that. And again, sadly, even some Christians this time of the year, you know, fail to celebrate the full significance of the birth of Jesus Christ.

[7 : 07] And, you know, this was no ordinary birth. That was our subject last Sunday. He was virgin born. And all the significance of that, which, again, we discussed last Sunday.

And so, therefore, he was no ordinary child like any other child that was born.

The Bible declares him to be Emmanuel, which means, of course, God with us. The Bible declares that he is wonderful counselor.

The Savior. The Savior. The mighty God. The everlasting Father. The Prince of Peace. The Savior. The Savior. James Allen Francis was a pastor in Nova Scotia, Canada, way back during the late 1800s and early 1900s. And did a lot of writing as well as preaching and pastoring.

[8 : 11] And he wrote what has now become, still maybe a little obscure for many of us. Maybe you've never heard this. But he did write something that has become a favorite quote among Christian pastors, anyway, regarding Jesus.

Not just his birth, but his entire life. And he wrote these words. He said, And so true.

All right, so with that said, let me go ahead and read then our passage. And again, I'm just going to read verses 1 through 4 in Hebrews chapter 1. And I'll read a little bit more of it as we go along.

But listen to these words. 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.

And of course, that name is Jesus. Now, what do these few verses, these four verses, and a little bit more we'll add later, what do these verses reveal about that baby that was born in Bethlehem and was wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid there in that manger?

[10 : 26] What do these verses say about that baby? Well, they reveal that he was no ordinary child, as I've already said, and we all know.

He was no ordinary child in at least three ways. Three ways, three ways, more than three, but these passages reveal three ways that Jesus was something special, no ordinary child.

And first of all, he was the communicator of all truth. That's number one. He was the communicator of all truth.

Look again at verse one. God who at various times, various ways, spoke. You really ought to underline that word in your Bible if it's not to you sacrilegious to write in your Bibles.

You ought to underline that word spoke. God at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets.

[11 : 33] Now, we'll stop right there for just a minute because that's the Old Testament, isn't it? He spoke by the prophets. That's our Old Testament. And God revealed His redemptive purposes, His plan to the people living in the Old Testament in Old Testament times.

He spoke to them through the prophets. And many of those people living in the Old Testament times believed God. They were saved. They were saved.

But let's read on because we are now in the New Testament and we're focusing upon that baby that was born in Bethlehem over 2,000 years ago. Let's read on and see what it says.

God has in these last days spoken to us by His Son. His Son. And that's Jesus. And this is really incredible when you start to think about it.

God spoke to mankind. God spoke. Do you realize the significance of that? Do you realize how amazing that is?

[12 : 40] I've had the opportunity to teach preaching to a number of students over the years in Ukraine and also in China and always begin with what I call a theology of preaching.

That is, to give the reason why there is such a thing as preaching. I mean, why is there such a thing as what I'm doing here this morning? Why is there Christian preaching and why is Christian preaching unique among all other forms of public speaking and speech making and so forth? It stands alone. And why is that? Because God the Father spoke. He spoke. And God the Holy Spirit had it written down for us.

And God commanded that it be proclaimed, that it be preached and taught in the name of God the Son. That's why we have Christian preaching. Now, there are at least three things in this passage, in this text, that tell us about Jesus being the communicator of all truth.

And the first one is this. He is God's final communication. God's final, we could even use the word revelation.

[13 : 57] You see, God over the ages gave us a gradual revelation of Himself and a gradual unfolding and revealing of His plan, His redemptive plan.

And God revealed Himself, unfolded this plan in many, many different ways. He spoke to us and still speaks to us in nature.

No doubt about that. In fact, the Bible tells us that. And yet, I want to say to you that you cannot find all you need to know about God in nature. Although Romans 1 tells us that you can find enough to be condemned, but you cannot find enough to be saved.

We need more. And God also speaks in history, primarily biblical history, or we could call it and should call it redemptive history recorded in God's Word.

All of the events of history from the beginning when all things were created and all down through the Old Testament. And God has revealed Himself and His plan through biblical history.

[15 : 09] And yet, you cannot find all that you need to know about God and about His plan in history. And God has also, He also speaks in His law, the Mosaic law, the first five books of the Bible.

God speaks through His law, but you know you cannot find all that you need to know about God in the law. And God spoke through the prophets as Hebrews 1 tells us.

He spoke through the prophets, but you cannot tell, cannot find out everything you need to know about God through the Old Testament prophets. But here's the idea. Gradually and bit by bit, God has been unfolding His plan and finally, finally, in these last days, verse 1 says, in these last days, what days are those?

Well, primarily, the days that started with the birth of Jesus there in Bethlehem. These last days started there. They continue on. And so, God says, in these last days, God has spoken to us by His Son.

By His Son. And that child born in Bethlehem is God's final revelation. His final revelation. God has nothing else to say to us.

[16 : 34] We don't need Him to say anything else. This is His final revelation. And so, we might even ask the question, does God have a message for the world in which we're living today on this day in December, December 14th, 2014?

Does God have a message for mankind today? And the answer is yes. It is Jesus Christ. Savior and Lord.

That's it. That's it. Jesus is God's final communication to man. Final revelation. No need to look any further for anything more or anyone else.

You have found what God has to say if you have found Jesus Christ. But also, He's not only God's final revelation, but He is God's full revelation or the full communication of God Himself.

Verse 3, who being the brightness or radiance of His glory and the express image of His person.

[17:44] That's how it's worded in the New King James Version. Brightness. The brightness of His glory or radiance. That word brightness means the outshining of God.

The expression, the outshining of God Himself. He's the brightness, the outshining of God. And then the phrase, the express image of His person literally means the exact representation of God. The exact representation of Him. The ESV, I think, does a better job. It brings out the more literal meaning. The exact imprint of God's nature.

Of His nature. You know what all that means? It means when you look at Jesus, you're looking at God. You're looking at God Himself. John 3, 19, in Jesus' dialogue with Nicodemus, He said at one point in verse 19, He said, And this is the condemnation, that light has come into the world.

That is literally, Jesus, the full revelation of God, has come into the world and men loved darkness rather than light. Why?

[18:57] Because their deeds were evil. Their deeds were evil. Now, which is more absurd? A child afraid of the dark or a grown man afraid of the light? Absurd.

And yet that's the case. And did you know that there are countless intelligent adult men and women in the world today who are afraid to listen to the message of God's Word preached?

Whether it's one-on-one or in a setting like this where a man stands behind a pulpit and opens up God's Word and proclaims the Gospel, the truth of Scripture.

There are countless people today who are afraid to listen to that. And some of them are sitting in church services just like this one this morning. I don't know if we've got any here this morning like this.

But there are people sitting in worship services just like this and do so every Sunday morning. and yet they are trying to figure out some way not to listen to the truth of God's Word.

[19:58] And many of them are kind of carrying on a little debate a little argument in their own minds against the truth of God's Word. And the reason is simple.

They don't want to know the truth because their deeds are evil. They don't want to come to Jesus because they're sinners because of their sin and their love of it.

That's what the Bible says here. Some men hate the light and they will not come to the light because their deeds are evil. They are living in sin. They are living in rebellion against the God of all creation.

They're and rebellion against His Son. And some people as it's been said cannot find God for the same reason a thief cannot find a policeman. They didn't want to find Him.

And many do not want to find God. Jesus is the full communication of God. Jesus said in John 10 and verse 30 He who has seen me has seen the Father.

[21:02] He said in John chapter 10 and verse 30 excuse me that was 14 verse 9 in John 10 verse 30 I and my Father are one. One.

third I would say in connection with Jesus as the creator of all things He is not only God's final revelation and full revelation but God's flesh and blood revelation.

His flesh and blood communication. Verse 2 says God has in these last days spoken unto us by His Son which is a clear reference to Jesus of course.

Jesus in human flesh God clothed in flesh and really this is amazing too God spoke to us through human flesh flesh because we needed Him to do that.

Not only did we need to hear from Him through human flesh but we also needed a Savior who was human who could take on our sin and die for our sin.

[22:08] But God spoke through human flesh and in the context of this holiday season God spoke to us through a little baby to begin with. Though He didn't stay a little baby of course.

But think about that in itself the infinite God became an infant there at the birth of Jesus Christ and that's why He is called Emmanuel which means of course God with us.

Do you see the important how important the incarnation is? Don't just meditate upon that that great doctrine that great truth which is what this holiday is all about Christmas is all about it's the incarnation God becoming a man.

Think about the incarnation think about how important it is how crucial it is that's why the virgin birth is such a crucial doctrine without it there would be no incarnation but think about the significance of

the incarnation God becoming a man see Jesus is God's way that the invisible becomes visible for us Jesus is God's way that the unknowable becomes unapproachable becomes touchable approachable Jesus is God's only way that the unsavable becomes savable it's through Jesus Christ Jesus is the communicator of all truth there's a second thing this passage reveals about this little baby born in

Bethlehem that is that he is the creator of all things the creator of all things and I touched on this briefly last Sunday night if you were here about Jesus the creator verse 2 ends with this declaration through whom also that is through Jesus he made the world that's a pretty big statement isn't it he made the world now at the very least that means that Jesus is the power of creation clearly and so according to the Bible and not just this passage but others that and I'll read some of those here in just a minute but according to the Bible who made this world Jesus did who made the universe in all of its its bigness and complexity and and beautifulness and vastness and so forth who made this universe with all of the stars and planets and everything else in all that working in perfect sink who made it what Jesus did not according to me according to the Bible

[25 : 20] Jesus did that as one theologian put it he was the one who scooped out the oceans and heaped up the mountains and flung the stars out into space John 1 3 is another reference to this all things were made through him without him nothing was made that was made now you couldn't get any more all inclusive than that without him nothing was made that was made so everything that was made he made it very clear in it and it's all all of it done through Jesus he's the power of creation so at the very least we're talking about that here in this passage remember we're focusing upon who that little child was that was born there in Bethlehem but not only the power of creation he is the preserver of creation the preserver of creation look at verse 3 again

Jesus upholds all things by the word of his power there's a whole lot in that one phrase we're not going to have time to look at tonight just the very thought of the word of his power I mean really the creation was spoken into existence he's not talking about the creation here he's talking about the preserving of it he he upholds all things Jesus not only created all things spoke all things into existence but he also holds upholds all things he upholds all things by the word of his power and this word upholds is a very common word it just simply means to carry carry to bear something and the idea being to bear it along to carry it along and so that's the idea behind that word so the literal meaning is that everything all things all creation all created things are being moved along they're being carried along by his power that's pretty amazing let me give you another passage Colossians chapter 1 verses 16 and 17 for in or by him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on the earth visible and invisible you see the bible says it's quite often about Jesus being the creator of all things there's no doubt about it he goes on to say all things were created through him and for him and he is before all things so he was not created he was before all things and by him here's the part of it that I want you to notice by him by Jesus all things consist that's the word of the new king James literally holds together by him all things hold together without Jesus everything would fly apart as scientists like I said last Sunday night scientists don't know how things hold together they have through their technology and God given intelligence being able to discover all the very elements of creation though I don't think they know it all yet some of it's still theory they don't know they don't know how it all holds together what keeps all those atoms together what keeps this pulpit from just flying apart for that matter this preacher some days I feel like I'm going to fly apart he holds it all together you know people are always speculating about the world coming to an end we're just confronted by that all the time in fact it's one of Hollywood's favorite plots you know doomsday world coming to an end whether it's some meteorite that plows into the planet and ends life as we know it on this earth everything except cockroaches because they will always endure or maybe it's global warming I don't want to get too political this morning but it's a bunch of hooey in my opinion there's a good theological word isn't it you know or maybe it's some cataclysmic earthquake you know or some monstrous tornado that's full of sharks or something like that when you really start putting it that way it's really silly isn't it it's silly no matter how you put it well you know it's just doomsday that seems to be on people's minds Hollywood loves that kind of scenario they can make hay out of that a lot of money out of that this world is not going to come apart or blow up until Jesus gives his okay so they say no matter what you don't need to fear you just need to trust him there are people in this world who are coming apart though I heard about a little boy who got a really bad sunburn on his shoulders and face first sunburn he'd ever had and so he was beginning to peel and his mom was walking by his bedroom

and she heard him crying in there and she looked in and he was peeling skin off of his shoulders and crying she heard him say I'm only five years old and I'm already coming apart a lot of people are coming apart today flying apart at the seams you know everything failing and why because they've left Jesus out of their

[31 : 29] Christmas one thing the bigger picture is they've left him out of their lives left him out of their lives and so they're just flying apart and Jesus is the only one who can hold your life together now he means much more than that and his significance is more than just keeping your life together but Jesus is the one through whom by him all things hold together and no one else Jesus is the creator of all things he's the power of creation he's the preserver of creation and also this passage tells us he is the possessor of creation it's all coming to him verse 2 appointed heir of all things heir of all things it's all his so you know the creation was made by him and through him and for him and one day it's all coming to him it's all his and you hear people say you know what's this world coming to ever heard anybody say that what's this world coming to it's usually the older generation of which I'm a part now and so we see things and listen to things see things on TV and new fangled gadgets and what's this world coming to well it's coming to

Jesus it's coming to him he's heir of all things it all belongs to him even that piece of property you pay your monthly mortgage on you say that's mine it's not yours it's his it belongs to Jesus it's his psalm 24 verse 1 the earth is the Lord's and all its fullness the world and all and those who dwell therein that's all of it it's his psalm 15 verse 10 for every beast of the forest is mine and the cattle on a thousand hills so he owns the cattle he owns the hills it's all his he's the possessor of creation and we're focusing on the significance of that little baby born in Bethlehem lying in that manger who is he more than just a baby no ordinary baby for sure more than just a baby according to Hebrews 1 he is the communicator of all truth he is the creator of all things and then one more he is the consummator of all time that is he's going to bring everything to its foreordained predetermined conclusion and he's working right along to that end he's the consummator of all time he is the one who got it all started because he created all things nothing that was made that was made was not made by him so he got it all started and he's the one who's going to bring it all to its predetermined foreordained conclusion its end and it's he's got a plan he's going to work it going to bring it to that end the consummation of all things he's the consummator see when god made this world through his son he didn't just wind it up like you would a clock and let it tick tock and run down eventually god is not sitting in heaven uninvolved you know just kind of a kind of a divine bystander who's watching his creation and just waiting to see what's going to happen it may seem like that sometimes you know in our very narrow view of things especially when things are not working well and we look at our world in such a mess and we kind of have might even have the idea that god's uninvolved but that's not the case he didn't just get this thing going and let it go he's involved and he's involved through his son and verses 3 and 4 reveal three ways

Jesus is acting in human history to bring it to his divine and predetermined end first and foremost as savior as savior see his his work as savior is not just for now it's not just so that you can have your sins forgiven and be you know adopted into his family that's wonderful salvation is something that has a beginning point and it has an ongoing aspect and has an ultimate conclusion and that conclusion is eternity in glory and so he is the consummator of all time in that he is the savior verse 3 says when he had by himself purged our sins and don't just pass over that too quickly it says he did that he did it purged our sins in fact

I really prefer the new king james and king james here because these versions bring out the what's called the reflexive pronoun he himself or he by himself purged our sins he didn't need any help from you he did it all for you think about his work his involvement in time your time and eternity as savior to save you redeem you and to continue to work in your life to make you more like himself and then the ultimate salvation in terms of glorification savior savior but also Jesus is the consummator of all time as our sustainer he sustains us it's implied here in verse three and we need to add to this from other places in scripture but verse three says and sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high so what is bethlehem's baby doing right now not a baby anymore but what is Jesus doing right now he's interceding for it he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high and he's doing he's interceding for us and we go to other places in scripture to find that in romans 8 and verse 34 it is Christ who died and furthermore is also risen praise the Lord who is even right now at the right hand of God who also makes intercession for us he speaks for us speaks on our behalf he prays for us he intercedes for us and we can go back to

[39 : 24] Hebrews 7 and verse 25 therefore he that that's speaking of Jesus is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through him since he always lives to make intercession for them who are the them those who come to God by him by Jesus!

He makes intercession for them he died for us and he lives to keep us he lives to keep us to sustain us he is the consummator of all time and so he saved us as savior and as sustainer and then one more as sovereign he's the consummator of all time and eternity because he is sovereign he is sovereign God did you know that there's coming a time when time itself will end when time will be no more there will be no more time there's coming a time when there's no time not that you're out of time it means the time ends there's no more time just eternity that time is coming did you know that there's coming a time when all of this all of this this creation is going to come to an end that's not bad news that's good news and it's difficult for us because we're all of us from the pulpit to the pew we're we're still connected to this world the things that we love in it family and other things and the thought of all that coming to an end kind of disturbs us but that's not a bad thing it's a good thing and there's several things that

Hebrews says about this in verse four having become so much better than the angels as he has by inheritance!

He obtained a more excellent name than they if you've done any studying in the book of Hebrews then you know that the word better is something that appears over and over again in this book in fact thirteen times you'll find the word better in the book of Hebrews and so Hebrews talks about Old Testament sacrifices it talks about Old Testament prophets and talks about Old Testament revelation and it talks about angels and it talks about tabernacles and so forth and over and over and over again it says that Jesus is better not just a step better infinitely better better he's better he's sovereign God look at verse eight eight and following here in this chapter I didn't read this a moment ago I want to read it now but to the son he says that is to

Jesus the son God the son the father says your throne oh God is forever and ever a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of your kingdom and look at verse ten you Lord in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth and the heavens are the work of your hands they will perish 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 wonderful see the coming of Jesus beginning with his birth and adding to that his life and the cross the coming of Jesus is the dividing of time all the centuries of history converge upon him we understand that don't we from scripture he's our

[43 : 46] Lord whether a person understands it or not all the centuries are they do converge on Jesus and all the centuries will reach their consummation in Jesus in Jesus because to the son God the father said to the son that is that babe in the manger to the son he says God the father says your throne oh God is forever and ever you know I don't know because I haven't lived you know long long long time but I don't know that any of us in this building have ever lived in such uncertain times as we're living in today for a number of reasons but good news good news one of these days Jesus is going to come and make it all right make everything right that's good news

King Jesus you see King Jesus is not going to stay seated at the right hand of the majesty on high the throne of God he's not going to stay seated there and listen he is I believe even now beginning to rise from his seat he is going to come back to this earth and in verse 13 God the father said sit at my right hand till until I make your enemies my footstool see Jesus is sitting until there's coming a time when sin will be judged once and for all there's coming a time when every wrong will be righted when Jesus comes Jesus is coming back as the consummator of all time this time of course he is not coming to a cradle he's coming to a crown he's not coming to redeem this time he's coming to reign and rule he's not coming clothed in shame and humility as the child of two peasants the son of a carpenter born in a stable not coming in shame or humility he's coming wrapped in glorious splendor are you ready for him really what it all comes down to isn't it are you ready for the consummation of all things one day it's coming are you ready