

Experiencing Christ in the Book of Hebrews (Part 1 - Hebrews 1-6)

Meeting 1

Hebrews starts in a wonderful way: *“God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets”* (Heb. 1:1). Our God is a living, speaking God. He is not just sitting up there, existing, and not saying anything. He wouldn’t just give us the Bible and keep quiet as we read it. You and I are created by Him. We are living human beings. Do we only speak one sentence a week? We speak to one another all the time, every day from morning until evening! During meals, we don’t just eat and not speak to each other. We have a lot to say! We are always speaking at home, at work, and outside of work. Do you think God does not speak? Our God is a speaking God who speaks to His people. He has much to say to His people. Unfortunately, we do not have this concept. We think He just speaks to us through the Bible, so we read the Bible. But if you have never heard Him speak to you directly, this is not normal.

God spoke at various times and in various ways to the fathers and to the prophets. He is a speaking God and has many things to tell us. Enoch walked with God (Gen. 5:22). What Enoch and God talked about is not recorded, but at least we know that God told Enoch about the flood long before it happened at Noah’s time. If I were Enoch I would have asked, “What? When is the flood going to happen?” God told him, “When your son dies, the rain and the flood will come.” This is why Enoch named his son Methuselah. They must have talked about many other things as well. If you

walk with God, do you think He would have nothing to say to you? He definitely would have many things to tell you. It is impossible to walk with God without hearing His speaking. God also appeared and spoke to Noah. At that time Noah did not have a Bible, so God appeared to him and showed him the whole design of the ark and gave him instructions on how to build it (Gen. 6:13-16). Even before the rain came, God spoke to Noah again and told him to hurry and bring the animals into the ark because the rain was going to come in seven days (Gen. 7:4). His speaking was very specific. Noah did not dream these things; God really spoke to him!

God spoke to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. When God revealed His plan to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah to Abraham, Abraham even bargained with God: *“Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there were fifty righteous within the city; would You also destroy the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous that were in it?”* (Gen. 18:23b-24). He asked God the same concerning forty, thirty, twenty and ten righteous men in the city. It was an amazing, wonderful conversation with God. God called Abraham His friend (Isa. 41:8; Jam. 2:23). He is a speaking God! God appeared to Moses, and they had wonderful conversations for many years. God talked to David. He spoke through many prophets and sent them to speak to His rebellious people when they had fallen so far and would not listen to Him. God spoke in so many different ways. He appeared to Isaiah, Daniel, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the minor prophets; the Word of God came to them. God spoke to them. It seems that God really desires to talk to us! How often does He talk to you?

“[God] has in these last days spoken to us by His Son” (Heb. 1:2a). “These last days” refers to the time when Jesus came to this earth, when God began to speak in and through His Son. I like the Gospel of John because it starts with: *“In the beginning was the*

Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1). God is the Word, He is a speaking God. God is the living Word. His speaking is so precious.

How much do you desire in your heart to hear God’s speaking? You like to hear a pastor’s sermon, or a brother’s message, someone explaining the Bible to you. You’re happy if you understand the Bible. But why do you not expect to hear from God directly? Don’t you desire to hear Him speak to you? Hebrews did not say, “Today, if you read the Bible, harden not your heart,” but *“Today, if **you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts**”* (Heb. 3:7b-8a, 15; 4:7b). That means the Lord is a speaking God. He wants us to hear Him. In Revelation 2 and 3, the Lord is telling us today, *“**He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.**”* What I desire is to stir up your spirit and heart to be a person who has an ear to hear the Lord Himself, the indwelling Anointing, speak to you – not to just know doctrine, to hear a message, or to read a book. You have to ask Him to speak to you! In the New Testament days, Paul prayed that the eyes of our hearts would be enlightened (Eph. 1:18). That means we have inner eyes. But we also have inner ears to hear the Spirit, the teaching of the Anointing, within us. I hope that all of us would learn to hear the speaking of the Lord, not just through the Bible, but through the Holy Anointing, the Son dwelling in us. Of course, we appreciate the fellowship with one another, but even more so, we have the privilege to listen to the leading and teaching of the Anointing. He speaks to us.

Hebrews says that first, God spoke to His people directly. Then, later on He spoke to them through the prophets. But today, in these last days – that means in our age now, after Christ has already come for the first time – God wants to speak to us in and through His Son and by the Holy Spirit. Of course, we also need the living Word, the Bible. But the ministry of the new covenant is

the Spirit and not the letter of the Word (2 Cor. 3:6). Even if you come to the written Word, you need the speaking of the Holy Spirit within you. You and I can make mistakes in understanding the Bible, but not the Anointing, not the Holy Spirit. It is only through the Holy Spirit dwelling in us that we can have the substance of what the Lord is speaking. He upholds *“all things by the word of His power”* (Heb. 1:3b). The Word has power! My speaking does not have power, but when God speaks, there is wonderful power. We need to know our living God. He is not an idol with a mouth that cannot speak, eyes that cannot see, and ears that cannot hear. He is the living God! We all must ask the Lord to speak to us and to give us ears to hear Him that we might experience the reality, the essence, and the substance of His Word.

In the first few verses of Hebrews, the writer introduces God’s speaking through His Son. The wonderful thing about the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ is that God’s speaking became very tangible, real and substantial in the person of Jesus Christ. The Word became flesh (John 1:14). You could see it and touch it, hear Him and feel Him. This is what 1 John 1:1-2a says, *“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life – the life was manifested, and we have seen [it]...”* It was so substantial! God’s living Word, His speaking, was no longer abstract or just concepts, but was expressed and lived out through the wonderful person of Christ. This is how we need to experience Christ; the Word of God must also become flesh in you and me. It should not just be a doctrine but must be lived out through us. This is the wonderful mystery of the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Word is lived out in front of us. That is why Hebrews 1:3a says that He is *“the brightness of His glory”* – the effulgence, the shining out of His glory – *“and the express image of His person.”* He is not just an

outward image, but the substance of the Word of God. The solid foundation of the Word of God is lived out through this person.

We all must confess that many times, when we speak so much, nothing happens because our words are just teachings and interpretations of the Bible. People do not see the reality of the Word in us; there is no substance, no shining out of the brightness of God's glory. If they were to see it in us, they would have no problem accepting it. When we speak, it is not only about speaking the right words, but we also need the experience and the substance of the living Word of God. When the Lord Jesus was on this earth, He didn't just speak, but He shined and fully brought forth the substance of God's Word. People could see that He was the Messiah, the Son of the living God. This is why the apostle John wrote that they not only heard Him – the Word of life – but saw Him and touched Him (1 John 1:1). Today, God needs messengers from whom God's glory shines forth and not just brothers who give messages that do not bear fruit because the substance is lacking. Aren't you tired of that? The kind of speaking we want today is the living Word of God becoming flesh, being made manifest in us. We want to be such messengers of the Lord as we have seen in Malachi, who do not just hear the Word, but taste the power, the essence of the Word and express it in our daily living. It's our tradition to "enjoy" a good message or a wonderful interpretation of the Bible. But what is there to enjoy? Can you enjoy durian (a type of fruit) just by imagining a durian? No, that is not real enjoyment! The real enjoyment of Christ comes from touching and tasting the substance and reality in our daily experience. Christ must be very real in our life! This is the living Word – Christ is the Word of God manifested in the flesh. This is the way God speaks to us today because He wants us to gain the substance and the reality.

It is through Christ as the Word that God made the world (Heb. 1:2b) – this is how the whole universe came into being. This is why we all need to be deeply impressed by this phrase: “*the word of His power*” (Heb. 1:3b). If we read the Bible and do not hear God speaking to us, that means we haven’t really heard anything, and nothing will happen – there is no power. Saints often complain: “I read the Bible, but it doesn’t work.” We have heard so many messages in our lifetime, but what was the result? Did they accomplish God’s plan? Did they express God’s glory? No. The messages did not work; they had no power. In the end, everything collapsed. This is my experience. Some even say: “I don’t want to listen to any messages anymore.” This is because there is no power in those messages, nothing happens. We need a change! Especially now, towards the end of this age. We know the Lord is coming very soon. We cannot just take things for granted and continue as we have in the past – in a powerless way. Every time we touch power, it should shake our being, just like touching an electric current, like touching a live wire. When you read the Bible in the Spirit, do you get shocked, or does nothing happen, because there is no power? In the Holy Scriptures, many who touched the living Word of God fell down – they really touched the power. But when we read the Bible, we close the book, say “Amen” and nothing happens. That means God did not speak to you, because every time God speaks, things come into being. This is how we should read the Bible. Our whole being must be open to God. I don’t want to just understand the Bible, I want to hear Him, touch Him, gain Him. I want Him to work in me, to touch me. You don’t need to be an electrician to enjoy electricity in your house. Similarly, we don’t need special qualifications to hear God’s speaking. This wonderful Christ is in me, in you, in all of us! Change your concept!

We have the privilege to hear Him and to touch Him. Don’t think, “Oh, I need to know so much.” The apostles John and Peter were

fishermen, not scribes or Pharisees. The chief priests, elders and Pharisees marveled that the apostles knew so much and were so powerful even though they were not educated (Acts 4:13). It was because they were with Jesus day in and day out. Are you with Him day in and day out? Are you living Christ or are you just reading the Bible? After so many years, I can testify that even if you know the whole Bible but are not living Christ, you have nothing. May the Lord speak to us as is written here in the book of Hebrews. We need to have ears to hear the Holy Spirit's speaking and not just read the Bible. Our desire, when listening to Him, is to obey and do according to His Word. If you don't obey, you are not listening.

When the Lord came, He quoted Isaiah: *"Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, and seeing you will see and not perceive"* (Matt. 13:14b; Mark 4:12; Isa. 6:9). I don't want to be such a person! How often do you earnestly tell the Lord, "Lord, give me ears to hear what the Spirit is speaking. I want to be a person who hears You"? Whenever we have a question, we prefer to ask another person but don't go to the Lord first and ask Him and wait to hear His speaking. We ask one another but we don't ask the Lord! It seems easier to hear a human voice than the Lord's speaking through the Spirit. I am thankful to the Lord because I don't have anyone to go to if I have a question. I have to go on my knees and ask and pray and wait until I hear Him speaking to me. It's very good if you have nobody to ask because then you will go to Him and ask Him. This is a wonderful experience! All the prophets in the Old Testament days cried out to Him and came to Him.

Reasons We Do Not Hear Him

Why do we not hear the Lord? Hebrews 2:1 is a warning for us: *"Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away."* What does it mean to give

earnest heed? It means to have an earnest, serious desire to do what He says (not just to know what He says). It means you are willing: “Lord, I want to do what you say.” If you have no desire nor serious intention to obey Him, you are not giving earnest heed to what He says. Why read the Bible if you do not give heed, do not have the earnest desire and the intention to obey and do what He wants you to do? When we come to the Word of God, our inward attitude and intention should be that we want to hear Him because we want to do what He says. If we do not do that, we will keep reading but drift farther and farther away. In the end, our reading will not mean anything. We will fall asleep and drift away slowly, like a piece of wood drifting back and forth in the ocean, going farther and farther away from the shore. We will end up so far away and won’t even know it. Unfortunately, this is the experience of many.

That is why James says, *“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only”* (Jam. 1:22). If you are not a doer, it is like looking at your face in the mirror, walking away and forgetting what you have seen (Jam. 1:23-24). For example, we forget so quickly what we read during morning watch. So we need to be those who take earnest heed to God’s Word and to what we hear from Him, by having the intention to obey and do what He says. Once you do what He says, it becomes your experience. And when something becomes your experience, you won’t forget it because it has become something real in your life. By doing what He says, the Word becomes your reality, your substance.

*“Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: ‘Today, if you will hear His voice, do not **harden your hearts**’* (Heb. 3:7-8a). Notice that the verse does not say “as the Bible says” or “as the Psalm says” but “as the Holy Spirit says.” Maybe we do not realize that our hearts are hardened and that we have a heart problem, a rebellious heart. Fallen human beings are naturally rebellious. When you ask

a child to do something, their favorite response is, “No.” This is our fallen nature. How many times has the Lord told you “Stop” and have you said, “No, I like doing this”? When He says, “Come and spend some time with Me,” you say, “Not now, later. I have so many things to do.” From morning to evening, there will always be something for you to do. This is a sign of a hardened heart! It is not an outright “no” like that of a little child, but a more refined “not now...I’m busy...later.” But it is the same. So do not harden your heart like the children of Israel in the wilderness. The Lord was not happy with them.

If we do not learn to hear His voice and continue to harden our hearts, our condition will get worse. Hebrews 5:11 says, *“Of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become **dull of hearing**.”* You may not be totally deaf, but you can be dull of hearing; basically, that means that you cannot hear anymore. It is like being a disobedient child who says, “I know, I know...” but does not do what the parents repeatedly tell him to do. Our God is a speaking God. We all need His living speaking again and again because we have not grasped it! If you have no intention of doing what the Lord tells you, you will become dull of hearing. He will keep saying, “Practice the priesthood, keep the feasts, experience Christ as the offerings,” and if you just say, “I know, I know,” in the end, you will not want to hear it anymore and will be dull of hearing, because you do not have the reality. It will come to a point where God will not say anything to you anymore because you do not do what He tells you to do. If we keep neglecting Him, the Lord will have nothing to tell us.

This is a very important word for all of us. We cannot go on if we do not hear His speaking and do not do what He has spoken to us. It would be a tragedy if we were to come to a point where the Lord would no longer speak to us. In the Old Testament days, God spoke many times in many ways, yet the children of Israel did not

do what He told them to do. In the end, they were led into captivity, and everything was gone. Our hearts should not be hardened. We must learn to take heed to God's speaking and obey Him in whatever He wants us to do.

To believe in Him means to obey Him. According to Hebrews 3, unbelief means that you are disobedient to Him (Heb. 3:18-19). What is the use of your faith if you believe the teachings but do not do them? This is why James 2:20 says that *"faith without works is dead."* Faith without works means you believe, but you do not do – there is no reality! Are we like this? Many people do not like James because they do not like to hear that faith without works is dead. People want faith, but not works; they do not want to obey. This is a very crucial point. If we are the kind of people Hebrews encourages us to be – those who take heed, obey, and are not dull of hearing – we will really grow spiritually, in a very fast-paced way. You will change and be transformed. God will have many more things to say to you. Praise the Lord. May the Lord have mercy on us! Christ in the book of Hebrews is a wonderful Christ. Everything God did through Christ Jesus was done so that it can become our experience!

Note: The above content has not been reviewed by the speaker.