

Advent (Week 2) – Hebrews 8:1-3

Main Idea: In Christ, God came into the world He created, becoming one of us so that we might become one with Him.

Introduction

As the Christmas season approaches each year, the church enters **a season historically known as Advent**. The word comes from the Latin *adventus*, meaning “coming,” “arrival,” “invasion,” or “interruption.” Beginning in the fifth century, the church sets aside the four Sundays leading up to Christmas Day as a time to pause, reflect, and remember the miracle of the incarnation—not simply the birth of Jesus as a baby, but the eternal Son of God taking on human flesh in order to accomplish the mission of salvation (Luke 19:10). **Advent is a season of reflection and expectation, a time when we look back to the Word becoming flesh (John 1:14) and look forward to His final coming in glory.** In a culture saturated with commercialism, sentimentalism, and religious confusion, Advent keeps our focus on the truth the Scriptures so clearly declare: **In Christ, God Himself entered our world, stepped into the frailty of human existence, and took upon Himself the nature of those He came to redeem.** This year our Advent series come through the lens of the Epistle to the Hebrews, a letter written to show how Christ fulfills the entire Old Testament story as the One who brings the shadows of the old covenant into their true substance (Col. 2:17).

The Epistle to the Hebrews was written to a group of Jewish believers who were facing tremendous pressure and temptation to abandon Christ and return to the familiar customs, rituals, and legal practices of Judaism. Their faithfulness had become costly. Their communities opposed them, their families misunderstood them, and the comforts of old religious structures appealed to them. Into this environment, the author of Hebrews writes not poetry, but strong exhortation and serious encouragement. From the opening verses, he reminds them that God’s revelation has reached its fullness in Christ, who is the radiance of His glory and the exact imprint of His nature. As we study this epistle, the unity of the entire Bible becomes increasingly clear. Scripture presents one unfolding narrative that centers on the person and work of Jesus Christ. **In the Old Testament, Jesus is predicted** through promises, prophecies, types, and shadows. **In the Gospels, He is revealed** in His life, death, and resurrection, fulfilling all that was anticipated. **In the Book of Acts, Jesus is preached** as the risen Lord whose kingdom advances through the witness of the church. **In the Epistles, Jesus is explained**, as the apostles unpack the meaning of His person and work for the life and doctrine of believers. **And in Revelation, Jesus returns** as the victorious King who brings God’s redemptive plan to its glorious completion.

I. What Jesus Offers | Hebrews 8:1-3

Hebrews 8 opens with deliberate clarity as he turns our attention to the heart of Christ’s ministry—His role as the true High Priest who serves in the true sanctuary of heaven, offering Himself on behalf of His people. The opening words are emphatic: “Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest” (v.1). In other words, everything the old covenant anticipated and everything the prophets promised finds its fulfillment in Him. The old covenant priests offered sacrifices for sins daily because sin was never fully removed (Heb. 10:1-4). Christ, however, offers Himself—once for all (Heb. 7:27). **The old covenant priests served as shadows of heavenly realities.** Christ serves as the substance itself (Heb. 8:5). The old covenant was temporary and anticipatory. Christ inaugurates a covenant that is better in every way because it rests on better promises (Heb. 8:6). **Unlike earthly priests who ministered in a man-made sanctuary, Christ serves at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.** Unlike priests who offered repeated sacrifices that could never remove sin permanently, Christ offered Himself once for all forgiving sinners completely. And unlike the old covenant, which was temporary, limited, and anticipatory, Christ mediates a better covenant founded on better and eternal promises. The author to the Hebrews confirms that the incarnation was necessary not only for Jesus to die in our place; but to eliminate any need for earthly or temporary mediators between God and man (John 14:6; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 2:14-17; 9:11-15; 1 John 4:9-10).

Christ's priestly work addresses the deepest human fear: the fear of judgment. **Death is not merely the fear of the unknown; it is the doorway to divine accountability (Matt. 10:28; Heb. 9:27).** Under the old covenant, sacrifices had to be repeated because sin remained. But Christ's once-for-all sacrifice removes the curse that hangs over humanity and frees believers from divine wrath. The condemnation that rightly belonged to us was placed on Him. Because our Priest now lives forever, those united to Him can face suffering without despair, trials without terror, and death without dread. **The One who became like us is the One who intercedes for us, strengthens us, and promises never to leave us (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25; 13:5).**

To Ponder:

1. In what ways do believers today still look for earthly mediators—whether religious systems, leaders, or personal rituals—and how does the clarity of Hebrews 8 call us to rest in Christ alone?
2. Where in your life are you still relating to God as though you lived under the old covenant—trying to earn His favor or carry guilt He has already removed?

The story of Simeon provides a powerful window into what the coming of Christ truly accomplishes. Luke tells us that Simeon was a righteous and devout man who had been waiting for “the consolation of Israel,” and the Holy Spirit had revealed to him that he would not die before he saw the Lord's Christ (Luke 2:22-35). **Day after day, Simeon entered the temple, watching, waiting, longing for the fulfillment of God's promises. He stood where countless sacrifices had been offered, where priests moved daily through shadows and symbols, where generations had looked for redemption that had not yet fully come.** When Mary and Joseph arrived with the infant Jesus, Simeon took the child into his arms and blessed God. In that moment, the long-awaited hope of Israel was no longer a promise but a reality—no longer a shadow but the substance of complete redemption. **Simeon held in his hands the true High Priest—the One who would accomplish in reality what the earthly priests could only foreshadow.** He held the One who would offer not the blood of goats and calves, but His own life for the sins of His people (Heb. 9:12). **He held the Mediator of the covenant Jeremiah promised, the covenant in which sins would be remembered no more (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:8-12).**

Simeon's words reveal the heart of the Advent hope: “My eyes have seen your salvation” (Luke 2:30). Not theoretical salvation. Not ritual salvation. Not symbolic salvation. But the salvation of God embodied in the Son of God. **Simeon's encounter shows us what Hebrews 8 proclaims: the shadows have given way to the substance, the types to the reality, the anticipation to the fulfillment.** Christ has come—not as another priest in a long line of priests, but as the final Priest who brings a better covenant grounded on better promises. Simeon's response exposes how deeply we need spiritual sight. **Many saw Jesus during His childhood, but not all saw Him as salvation.** Simeon did because the Spirit opened his eyes. **In a world filled with substitutes—good works, self-effort, guilt-management, and performance—Advent invites us to see Jesus as the only true Priest who secures our access to God.** Simeon looked at an infant and saw the Redeemer. Advent calls us back to clarity: the One we behold is the salvation of God.

To Ponder:

3. Simeon recognized Jesus as salvation when many did not. What might be clouding your spiritual sight this season—self-reliance, distraction, discouragement, or fear?
4. What would it look like this Christmas to behold Christ with renewed clarity and trust?