

**Text: Heb 1.3**

We keep going back to Hebrews 1 for our communion messages, and today our topic is:

*Sustainer of All Things*

Heb 1.2-3 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.  
<sup>3</sup> And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and **upholds all things by the word of His power**. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

The operative phrase in our text is “upholds all things by the word of His power.”

I want you to notice that the first phrases of the description describe the Son’s nature, who he is:

- He is the heir
- He is the creator
- He is the radiance of God’s glory
- He is the exact representation of God’s nature

**And... He upholds all things**

This comment speaks to our Lord’s relation to all things, that is to every atom of the universe — and every spirit as well.

**Proposition: All things exist by His word.**

## I. The scope of his power: all things

A. What is included in all things?

Jn 1.3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

1. The physical universe (Gen 1.1-31)
  - a. The heavens and the earth (1)
  - b. Light (3)
  - c. Atmosphere (6)

- d. Dry land and plants of all kinds (9, 11)
  - e. The heavenly bodies: sun, moon, stars (14)
  - f. All the living creatures of the sea (20)
  - g. All the living things on the earth (24)
  - h. And man (26)
2. The spiritual universe: Col 1.16, Ps 148.2, 5, possibly Gen 2.1 et al

Col 1.16 For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities— all things have been created through Him and for Him.

Ps 148.2 Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts!  
...<sup>5</sup> Let them praise the name of the LORD, For He commanded and they were created.

Gn 2.1 ¶ Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts.

- a. That means that “all things” includes all spirits
- b. All spirits includes all the angels
- c. All spirits includes all the demons
- d. And Satan

All things are all things.

## II. The work of his power: upholding

### A. What is upholding?

- 1. The basic meaning of the word is “to carry”
  - a. Pick something up and carry it from one place to another
  - b. Hold something you’ve picked up, to bear
- 2. From holding, it slips into “sustaining, preserving”

### B. Theological implications

- 1. The Son is not the same as the creation: he is outside it, holding it up

2. The Son is active in moving creation towards its goal, its destiny
3. The operations of natural laws are under his supervision: nothing happens without the Son's permission

### C. Back to "all things"

1. All those things we listed in point one: sun, moon, stars, animals, sea creatures, man, even the rocks and trees
2. And all the spirits: all, even Satan and his hosts, are upheld by him

But how?

## III. The operation of his power: by his word

Col 1.17 He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

Heb 1.3 And He ... **upholds all things by the word of His power**

### A. The word for "word" is *rhema*, not *logos*

1. Individual utterance as opposed to "thought"
2. In Hebrews, this word is used exclusively of God (3 refs)
  - a. By God's word, believers are saved (6.5)
  - b. By God's word, the heavens were made (11.3)
  - c. At God's word at Sinai, the Israelites were terrified (12.19)
3. The focus on individual words speaks of the Son's commanding the universe's existence
4. The very act of utterance is what sustains all things

"The creative utterance which called the universe into being requires as its complement that sustaining utterance by which it is maintained in being."<sup>1</sup>

ILLUSTRATION: It is said in Greek mythology that Atlas carries the earth as a burden on his shoulders \\ by contrast, the Son carries all creation by his breath...

<sup>1</sup> F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, Rev. ed., The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 49.

## B. When we worship him in communion

1. We praise the Lord for our redemption
2. We remember that even while redeeming sinners, his will kept the universe functioning
3. We recall that his will allows his enemies to continue their existence
4. And we bow: because he kept us in existence until we would trust him

### Conclusion:

**Proposition:** All things exist by His word.

Including sinners like you and me...