

Grace to You :: esp Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time

The Preeminence of Christ

Scripture: Hebrews 1:2–3

Code: 1601

INTRODUCTION

In the first three verses of Hebrews the writer introduces the person of Jesus Christ. The theme for the epistle is the superiority and preeminence of Christ. There is no other like Him--everything and everyone else comes under Him.

Jesus, A Man for All Men

The following has been said about Christ:

He came from the bosom of the Father to the bosom of a woman. He put on humanity that we might put on divinity. He became Son of Man that we might become sons of God.

He was born contrary to the laws of nature, lived in poverty, was reared in obscurity, and only once crossed the boundary of the land--in childhood. He had no wealth or influence, and had neither training nor education in the world's schools. His relatives were inconspicuous and uninfluential.

In infancy He startled a king; in boyhood He puzzled the learned doctors; in manhood He ruled the course of nature. He walked upon the billows and hushed the sea to sleep. He healed the multitudes without medicine and made no charge for His services. He never wrote a book, yet all the libraries of the country could not hold all the books about Him. He never wrote a song, yet He has furnished the theme for more songs than all song writers together. He never founded a college yet all the schools together cannot boast of as many students as He has. He never practiced medicine and yet He healed more broken hearts than the doctors have healed broken bodies.

He is the Star of astronomy, the Rock of geology, the Lion and the lamb of zoology, the Harmonizer of all discords and the Healer of all diseases.

Great men have come and gone, yet He lives on. Herod could not kill Him: Satan could not seduce Him: death could not destroy Him: the grave could not hold Him.

That was a description of Christ--the preeminent one. He is the theme of the epistle to the Hebrews. He dominates the book from one end to the other.

REVIEW

Hebrews is a marvelous letter from an unknown writer sent primarily to a congregation of Jewish believers living somewhere outside the land of Israel. They had evidently been won to Christ by apostolic missionaries. The bulk of the epistle is directed toward Christians, but throughout it there are at least five parenthetical warnings to unbelievers--to either those who knew the truth and were rejecting it or those who hadn't yet understood the truth. So whether the writer was directing the epistle to an unbeliever or a believer, he was constantly announcing the superiority of Christ. Even the Jewish Christians were in danger of remaining attached to the Old Covenant. He wanted them to understand that they didn't need it anymore because Christ was all sufficient. Thus Hebrews became a reminder to the Jewish Christians of the glories of the Savior. It was an encouragement for them to know that the New Covenant is better than the old. The Jewish believer did not have to hold onto the Old Covenant; he could let go and grow to maturity in Christ in the New Covenant.

Scattered throughout Hebrews are at least five parenthetical warnings to Jewish unbelievers of the consequences of rejecting the preeminence of Christ and the New Covenant. Fitting into the theme of the exaltation of Jesus Christ, the opening verses are high and lofty. They establish at the very beginning of the epistle His absolute and total preeminence. Jesus Christ is superior to everything and everyone in existence.

I. THE PREPARATION OF CHRIST (v. 1)

II. THE PRESENTATION OF CHRIST (v. 2a)

In the Old Testament, God spoke in many ways and many forms through many different individuals. In the New Testament God speaks through His Son. The writers of the New Testament are either historians or commentators on God's Son--either recording the history of the life of Christ or the principles laid down by Christ. He is the New Testament, which is the revelation of Christ.

Fulfilling the Old Testament

The transition of revelation from the Old Testament to the New Testament is called progressive revelation. The Old Testament was promise; the New Testament is fulfillment. Christ said, "I am not come to destroy [the Law], but to fulfill" (Matt. 5:17). The Old Testament clearly indicates that the men of faith who were writing it were trusting in a promise that was yet to come.

1. Hebrews 11:39-40--This chapter of Hebrews describes the heroes of faith of the Old Testament.

The writer says, "And these all, having received witness through faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." The Old Testament saints never saw the fulfillment of the promise. They wrote down what was going to happen without seeing it fully realized.

2. 1 Peter 1:10-12--The apostle Peter said the authors of the Old Testament tried hard to understand their own writings: "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you, searching what [person], or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ who was in them did signify, when he testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed that, not unto themselves but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel." In the Old Testament the prophets wrote about the unfulfilled promise and then read what they wrote to try to figure out what it meant. They knew nothing of the fulfillment of what they wrote.

Progressive revelation began in the Old Testament with a promise and ended in the New Testament with the fulfillment of God's Son.

There are no religions that give us the Word of God. Peter said that there is no salvation in any other than Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12). Hebrews 1:2 says, "[God] hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." God has spoken finally and exclusively in Jesus Christ. What will happen to people who are in all kinds of religions? If they do not hear what God says in the person of Jesus Christ then they do not hear God at all.

According to Jeremiah 23:21-22 and Amos 3:7, true prophets were let in on the secrets of God. They often wrote those secrets down without understanding them, but in Jesus Christ they are all understood. He is the fulfillment--He is God's final word. Second Corinthians 1:20 says, "All the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." Every promise resolves itself in Christ, thus He is the final revelation.

Notice that Hebrews 1:2 says, "Hath in these last days." What are the "last days"? Those are the days of the fulfillment of all promises. The Jewish nation saw the last days as the time when Messiah, the Kingdom, and salvation would come and Israel would no longer be under bondage. Jesus came to fulfill the promises. And although the promise of the Kingdom has been postponed, the age of fulfillment began when Jesus arrived. It won't be completed until we enter into the eternal heavens with Christ. The Old Testament age of promise ended when Jesus arrived.

Jesus Christ is no mere man--He is the climax of revelation from God. God fully expressed Himself in Christ. That makes Him something very special.

III. THE PREEMINENCE OF CHRIST (vv. 2b-3)

In this brief but potent section the Holy Spirit exalts Christ as the full and final revealed expression of God--as more exalted, more excellent, and far superior to anyone or anything. In these verses He

tells us that Christ is the end of all things, the beginning of all things, and the middle of all things.

Who is Jesus Christ? There are some people who think He is a good teacher. Other people think He was a religious fanatic. Some others say He was a fake. Others think He was a criminal, a phantom, or a political revolutionary. Some people say He was the highest form of human life--that He had a spark of divinity within Him. There are many explanations about who Jesus is, but I want you to hear what God says about who He is. God gives His answer in a seven-fold presentation of the excellencies of Christ.

A. His Heirship (v. 2b)

"Whom he hath appointed heir of all things"

The first thing we learn about Jesus Christ is that He is the heir of all things. Colossians 1:16 says that all things were created by Him and for Him. If Jesus is the Son of God then He is the heir of all that God possesses.

1. The passages

a) Psalm 2:6-9--"Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: The Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the nations for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." The psalmist indicated that God would have a Son who would become the heir of all that He possesses. That Son is Jesus Christ.

b) Psalm 89:27--"I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth." The word "firstborn" does not mean that Jesus Christ didn't exist at one time. The issue is that the firstborn has the right to the inheritance. In this case it's not a chronological term; it's a term of legal right. Christ is God's heir.

c) Romans 11:36--"For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen."

Everything that exists, exists for Jesus Christ. He is the heir of all things. That He is lifted to that plane is a testimony of His equality with God. It is beyond human understanding to imagine that the Galilean carpenter who was crucified like a common criminal, naked and bleeding on a cross outside the city of Jerusalem, is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

2. The proof

In Revelation 5, God is pictured sitting on a throne holding the scroll that is the title deed to the earth. He is keeping it for His heir. In verse 1 the apostle John said, "And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals." It was law in Roman times that a will had to be sealed seven times. The apostle John then says, "And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the scroll, and to loose its seals? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the scroll, neither to look on it. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the scroll, neither to look on it. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the scroll, and to loose its seven seals. And I beheld and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the

seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And he came and took the scroll out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne" (vv. 2-7). Why? Because He had a right to take it. He is the heir of the earth. John's vision in Revelation 5 prophesies that Jesus Christ will someday come and take the scroll out of the Father's hand to inherit the earth.

In Revelation 6 the tribulation begins as Christ takes back the earth that is rightfully His. One by one He unrolls the seals. As each seal is broken, He takes further possession of His inheritance. Finally, "The seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever" (Rev. 11:15). When the seventh trumpet sounds after the seventh seal has been unrolled, the earth will belong to Christ.

3. The price

Jesus Christ is the rightful heir to all God has. Hebrews 2:2 says, "[God] hath appointed [Christ] heir of all things." The Bible says that when He came to earth, He became poor for our sakes that we through His poverty might be made rich (2 Cor. 8:9). When Christ came to earth, He had nothing for Himself--He didn't even have a place to lay His head (Luke 9:58). His clothes were taken from Him, and He was buried in a grave that didn't belong to Him. On earth He was poor for our sakes, but one day He will inherit all things. According to Philippians 2:11, all will acknowledge Jesus as King.

In Acts 2:36 Peter said, "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." The carpenter from Galilee who died having been nailed to a cross is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He will rule the world. Even Satan knows that. When he tempted Him in the wilderness, he tried to get Christ to take the world by the wrong method by bowing down to him. Jesus is the heir of God's inheritance, which was secured by God's promise.

4. The partnership

According to Romans 8:16-17, you and I will be joint heirs with Christ. When we enter into His eternal Kingdom, we will jointly possess all He possesses.

5. The parable

Although Jesus is the heir of all that God possesses, amazingly some still reject Him. Many rejected God as He was revealed in the Old Testament. Now God speaks in the New Testament through His Son, and they continue to reject Him.

Matthew 21:33-44 is a tragic parable. Jesus said, "There was a certain householder, who planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and dug a winepress in it, and built a tower, and leased it to tenant farmers, and went into a far country. And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the farmers, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the farmers took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first; and they did the same unto them. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the farmers saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the lord, therefore, of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those farmers? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will lease his vineyard

unto other farmers, who shall render him the fruits in their seasons. Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner; this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits of it. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken, but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."

To willfully reject Jesus Christ, as the world did when it crucified Him, brings about damnation and destruction from a vengeful God. Since Israel not only killed the prophets, but also the Son, the promise was taken from them and given to a new nation, the church. Israel was set aside until the time of its restoration. How tragic it is that although Jesus Christ is clearly the final revelation of God--the ultimate King of Kings and Lord of Lords--men constantly reject Him, crucifying Him again, and putting Him to an open shame (Heb. 6:6).

B. His Act of Creation (v. 2c)

"By whom also he made the worlds"

Christ is the agent through whom God created the world. John 1:3 says, "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made." Jesus Christ is the agent of creation.

1. An infinite creation

Jesus had the ability to create, and that set Him apart from men. Only God can create; we can't. If you could create, you'd be married to a different woman, live in a different house, drive a different car, and probably have a different job--if you had any job at all. You could just sit in your backyard and make money. It's a good thing that God didn't give depraved men the right to create. The ability to create belongs to God, and that Jesus creates indicates He is God and establishes His absolute superiority over everything. He created everything material and everything spiritual. Man has stained His good creation with sin. Even creation groans to be restored to what it was in the beginning (Rom. 8:22).

The end of verse 2 says, "By whom also he made the worlds." The common Greek word for world is kosmos, but that is not the word used here. Aionas, which means "the ages," is used in verse 2. Jesus Christ is responsible for creating not only the physical earth, but also time, space, force, action, and matter. The writer of Hebrews does not restrict Christ's creation to this earth; he shows us that Christ is the creator of the entire universe and of existence itself. And Christ made it all without effort.

2. An improbable evolution

Sir John Echols, Nobel laureate in neurophysiology, said in Chicago in January, 1968, that the odds against the right combination of circumstances occurring to have evolved intelligent life on earth are about 400 thousand trillion trillion trillion trillion to one. Then, after admitting it was highly improbable, he went on to say that he believed that such did occur but could never happen again on any planet or in any solar system! His strange logic demonstrates the dilemma of humanistic science. If you don't recognize God as the Creator, then you have problems trying to explain how this incredible universe came into being.

Man thinks he came out of some primeval slime one day. (Now no one knows where the slime came from.) The heart of the wondrous creature called man beats eight hundred million times in a normal lifetime and pumps enough blood to fill a string of tank cars on a railroad track from New York to Boston! A tiny cubic half inch of brain cells contains all the memories of a lifetime. The ear transfers air waves through fluid without ever losing any sound. Can a creature like that be some kind of a cosmic accident?

Millions ... Billions ... Trillions

A. K. Morrison, another scientist, tells us that conditions for life on earth demand so many billions of minute interrelated circumstances appearing simultaneously, in the same infinitesimal moment, that such a prospect becomes beyond belief and beyond possibility.

Consider the vastness of our universe. If you could bore a hole in the sun and somehow put in 1.2 million earths, you would still have room for 4.3 million moons. The sun is 865,000 miles in diameter and 93 million miles away from earth. Our next nearest star is Alpha Centauri, and it is five times larger than our sun. The moon is only 211,453 miles away, and you could walk to it in twenty seven years. A ray of light travels at 186,000 miles per second, so a beam of light would reach the moon in only one and a half seconds. If we could travel at that speed, we would reach Mercury in four and a half minutes because it's only 50 million miles away. After two minutes and eighteen seconds we would have passed Venus, which is 26 million miles away. We could travel to Mars in four minutes and twenty one seconds because it's only 34 million miles away. The next stop would be Jupiter--367 million miles away--and it would take us thirty five minutes. Saturn is twice as far as Jupiter--790 million miles--and it would take one hour and eleven seconds. Eventually we would pass Uranus, Neptune, and finally Pluto--2.7 billion miles away. Having gotten that far, we still haven't left our solar system, which moves in a multimillion-mile orbit through endless space. The nearest star is ten times further than the boundaries of our solar system--20 billion miles away. The North Star is 400 hundred billion miles away, but that still isn't very far compared with known space. The star called Betelgeuse is 880 quadrillion miles from us and has a diameter of 250 million miles, which is greater than the earth's orbit.

Where did it all come from? Who made it? It can't be an accident. Someone made it, and the Bible tells us it was Jesus Christ. He is the creator who not only created the universe, but also can create new life in a man's soul. Second Corinthians 5:17 says, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation."

C. His Brightness (v. 3a)

"Who [Christ], being the brightness of his [God's] glory"

1. The manifestation of God

The Greek word for "brightness" is apaugasma, which means "to send forth light." Jesus is the manifestation of God--He expresses God to us. No one can see God at any time (John 1:18), and none of us ever will. Just as the rays of the sun give light, warmth, life, and growth to the earth, so Jesus Christ is the glorious light of God shining into the hearts of men. The brightness of the sun is the same nature as the sun-- it's as old as the sun and the sun has never been without its brightness. The brightness cannot be separated from the sun. The same is true of Christ in relation to God. He is of the same nature as God, He is as old as God, He has never been without God or God without Him, and He can never be separated from God. Yet the brightness of the sun is not the sun, and neither is Jesus God in that sense. He is fully and absolutely God, yet is a distinct person. Jesus Christ is the brightness of God's essence manifested to men.

2. The light of the world

We would never know what God was like if we didn't have Jesus to look at. In John 8:12 Jesus said, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Jesus Christ is the brightness of God's glory, and He can transmit that light into our lives so that we can radiate the glory of God. We live in a dark world. The darkness of injustice, failure, privation, separation, disease, and death surrounds us. A moral darkness exists as men are blinded by their godless appetites and passions. God sent His ray of light, Jesus Christ, into this dark world.

In 2 Corinthians 4:6 the apostle Paul said that "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shone in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." When God comes into your life, He gives you light so you can understand His glory. In verse 4, Paul said this about the problem of man: "The god of this age hath blinded the minds of them who believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." God sent His rays to man's world in the person of Jesus Christ that man might behold His light and His glory, and that he might know and radiate that light. But Satan has blinded the minds of men to prevent the light of the glorious gospel from shining on them. What a tremendous thing it is to realize that Jesus Christ, who is the full expression of God in human history, can come into my life and give me light in the darkness of this world--light to know and understand God, to know life and purpose and meaning, and to know happiness, peace, joy, and fellowship for all eternity.

D. His Being (v. 3b)

"The express image of his [God's] person."

Jesus Christ is the express image of God's person. Christ was not only God manifest, but also God in substance. The Greek word for the term "express image" is used in classical Greek to indicate a die or a stamp, or the mark made by a seal. In verse 3 it means that Jesus Christ is the exact reproduction of God. When a die is stamped, it gives an exact imprint. Jesus Christ is the reproduction of God in human form.

Notice also that verse 3 says, "The express image of his person." The Greek word for "person" means "substance" or "essence." Christ is the perfect essence of God--the personal imprint of God in time and space.

1. Colossians 1:15--"[Christ] is the image of the invisible God." The Greek word for "image" is eikon,

which means "a precise copy," "a reproduction," or "an exact image." To call Christ the eikon of God means He is the exact reproduction of God.

2. Colossians 1:19--"It pleased the Father that in him [Christ] should all fullness dwell."

3. Colossians 2:9--"In him [Christ] dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily."

Christ was not only God manifest, but also God in essence. Christ is God, yet He is distinct in His own person. In spite of that, men continue to reject Him. They continue to remain blind, never knowing God, and being forever separated from God and all that is good and gracious.

E. His Administration (v. 3c)

"Upholding all things by the word of his power"

Jesus Christ made all things and will someday inherit all things. He holds them together in the meantime.

1. Upholding the earth

The word "upholding" means "supporting" or "maintaining." It's used in the present tense, implying continuous action. Everything in the universe is sustained at this moment by Jesus Christ.

a) Avoiding chaos

Our lives depend on the constancy of physical laws. When an earthquake occurs and shifts things a bit, that's cause for concern or panic, depending on the severity of the quake. Can you imagine what would happen if Jesus Christ relinquished His sustaining power to the laws of the earth and the universe? We would go out of existence. Even if He simply stopped holding the law of gravity where it is we would all die. If the laws of science varied, we couldn't exist. The food you eat could turn to poison. You wouldn't be able to stay on the earth--you'd fall off, if you weren't drowned by the ocean first!

Consider what would happen if things changed. The sun has a surface temperature of twelve thousand degrees fahrenheit. If it were any closer to earth, we'd burn; and if it were any further, we'd freeze. Our globe is tilted on an exact angle of 23 degrees, which enables us to have four seasons. If it weren't tilted, vapors from the ocean would move north and south, eventually piling up monstrous continents of ice. If the moon did not remain a specific distance from the earth, the ocean tide would completely inundate the land twice a day. If the ocean floor merely slipped a few feet deeper, the carbon dioxide and oxygen balance in the earth's atmosphere would be completely upset, and no vegetable or animal life could exist on earth. If our atmosphere suddenly thinned out, many of the meteors that now harmlessly burn up when they hit our atmosphere would constantly bombard us.

b) Maintaining the cosmos

Things don't happen in our universe by accident. Jesus Christ sustains the universe. He is the principle of cohesion. He is not the deist's watchmaker creator who made the world, set it in motion, and hasn't bothered with it since. The reason the universe is a cosmos and not chaos--an ordered and reliable system instead of an erratic and unpredictable muddle--is the upholding power of Jesus Christ.

Scientists who think they are discovering great truths are doing nothing more than discovering the sustaining laws that Christ uses to control the world. No scientist--no mathematician, astronomer, or

nuclear physicist--could do anything without the upholding power of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ monitors and sustains the movements and developments of the universe, for the entire universe hangs on the arm of Jesus. His unsearchable wisdom and boundless power are manifested in the governing of the universe. And He upholds it all by the word of His power.

2. Upholding His people

When I think about Christ's power to uphold the universe, I realize that affects my personal life.

Philippians 1:6 says, "He who hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." When Christ begins a work in your heart, He doesn't end there. Jude 24-25 says, "Unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God, our Savior be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever." When you give your life to Jesus Christ, He can take you to the end of your life and make sure that you are in God's presence because He constantly sustains your life. He upholds you. A life that is not sustained by Christ is chaos.

F. His Sacrifice (v. 3d)

"When he had by himself purged our sins"

1. The ransom

The Bible says, "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). Jesus Christ went to the cross, died the death we deserved, and consequently freed us from the penalty of sin. The creation of the world and the upholding of it are wondrous works, but an even greater work is the purging of the sins of men.

a) Hebrews 7:27--"Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins and then for the people's; for this he did once, when he offered up himself." In the Old Testament, the priests had to make continual sacrifices, but Jesus made only one. He was not only the priest, but also the sacrifice in that He purged our sins--something the Old Testament sacrifices could not do.

b) Hebrews 9:12-14, 26--"Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?.... But now once, in the end of the ages, hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

God couldn't communicate with us and we couldn't enter into fellowship with Him unless sin was dealt with, so Christ went to the cross, bore the penalty of sin for all who accept His sacrifice, believe in Him, and receive Him. That's a tremendous statement for the writer of Hebrews to make when you consider the identity of his readers. He was writing to Jewish people to whom the cross was a stumbling block. But he doesn't apologize for the cross; he makes it one of the seven excellent glories of Christ.

c) 1 Peter 1:18-19--"Ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver and gold, from your vain manner of life received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

d) 1 John 1:7--"We have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." Jesus came as the perfect sacrifice. You and I are sinners. Either we pay for our own sin, or we allow Jesus Christ to pay for it. God decided to send His Son to die and to cleanse sin. If it is your desire to receive Jesus Christ as Savior, to believe and to accept His

sacrifice, then your sins are washed away. The Bible says that without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin (Heb. 9:22). The blood of Jesus Christ will never be applied to you unless you receive Christ into your life by faith.

2. The rejection

The basis of salvation is the shed blood of Christ, which purges sin. Yet there are still people who reject that. Hebrews 10:26 is a warning to them: "For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." If you reject Jesus Christ, there is nothing in the universe that can take away your sin, and you will die in your sin (John 8:24).

G. His Exaltation (v. 3e)

"[Christ] sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high [God]."

The right hand of God is His side of power, and Jesus took His place there.

1. The stature

The significant thing about the last statement of verse 3 is that Jesus sat down. That was contrary to everything the priesthood stood for in the Old Testament. There were no seats in the sanctuary. The priest's work was never finished so he never had time to sit down--he was always making sacrifice day in and day out. But Jesus offered one sacrifice, finished it, and then went to the Father and sat down. What couldn't be accomplished in all the Old Testament sacrifices was accomplished once by Jesus Christ for all time.

2. The signs

What does it mean that He sat down? It means He was exalted, and is a sign of many things.

a) Honor

Jesus was seated at the right hand of the Father, and that is the honored seat.

b) Rule

First Peter 3:22 says that Christ "is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him."

c) Rest

Hebrews 10:12 says, "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God."

d) Intercession

According to Romans 8:34, Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father making intercession for us.

We have seen God's portrait of Jesus Christ. He is preeminent in all His roles. We've seen Him as a prophet--the final spokesman for God. We've seen Him as a priest atoning and interceding for us. We've seen Him as King controlling, sustaining, and being seated on a throne. Anyone who says Jesus Christ is anything less than that is a fool. God says that He is preeminent in all things. What does that mean to you? To receive Jesus Christ is to enter into all that He is and has, but to reject Him is to be shut out from His presence into an eternal hell. There are no other choices.

Focusing on the Facts

1. Define progressive revelation.
2. Did the men of faith understand their writings? Support your answer with Scripture.
3. Who is the heir of all that God possesses (Heb. 1:2)?
4. Explain the meaning of "firstborn" as it is used in Psalm 89:27.
5. When does Christ take the earth as His inheritance (Rev. 11:15)?
6. What did Christ do to make us rich? Explain (2 Cor. 8:9).
7. What will happen to those who continue to reject Jesus Christ (Matt. 21:44)?
8. What does it mean that Christ "made the worlds" (Heb. 1:2)?
9. Explain how Christ is to God as the brightness is to the sun.
10. Why do men have a problem in trying to see God's light (2 Cor. 4:4)?
11. What did the writer of Hebrews mean when he said that Christ is the "express image" of God's person (Heb. 1:3)?
12. What are some of the things that could happen were Christ to relinquish His sustaining power of the universe?
13. What effect does Christ's sustaining power have on your personal life?
14. Name a greater work of Christ than His creation of the world or His sustaining of it (Heb. 1:3).
15. What must a person do before the blood of Christ can ever be applied to his life?
16. What is significant about the fact that Christ sat down (Heb. 1:3)?
17. Hebrews 1:3 says that Christ "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty." What does that signify?

Pondering the Principles

1. Read Hebrews 11:39-40 and 1 Peter 1:10-12. What couldn't the prophets see that you can? How

should that advantage help you to live your Christian life? How should that advantage affect your study of God's Word? Make sure you take advantage of what you know.

2. According to 2 Corinthians 8:9, we were made rich through Christ's poverty. In what ways has Christ made you rich? According to Romans 8:16-17, we have become joint heirs with Christ. Thank God for all you have been given that you did not have to work for. Thank Christ for paying the penalty that you deserved and allowing you to be a joint heir with Him.

3. In John 8:12 Jesus said, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." We have the great opportunity of transmitting Christ's light to the world. On a scale of 1-10, rate your success at reflecting His light to the unsaved world. Can unbelievers determine that you are a Christian by your behavior? Pray about your Christian walk. Ask God to help you to reflect His glory. Remember, Satan has blinded unbelievers to prevent them from seeing God's glory, so counteract that by being sure to reflect His glory.

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