

Hebrews Chapter One (vv.3-4)

Hebrews 1.1-4: The Doctrine of the Son's Glory

Hebrews 1.1-4: **Doctrine** of the Son's Glory (**7 truths**).

Hebrews 1.5-14: **Demonstration** of the Son's Glory (**7 Old Testament texts**).

Hebrews 2.1-4: **Duty** in Relation to the Son's Glory.

2 *Whom he hath appointed heir of all things (1), by whom also he made the worlds.(2) 3* *Who being the brightness of his glory (3), and the express image of his person (4), and upholding all things by the word of his power (5), when he had by himself purged our sins (6), sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high (7).*

The writer now proceeds to describe the greatness of God's Son and therefore the supreme revelation and salvation found in Him. These **seven** truths (as also the quotations) speak of Him in the **past, present** and **future**.

(4) As to the present, Christ is the 'express image (*charakter*) of His Person (nature)'. The word character means to 'engrave' or 'stamp', i.e. the Son bears the exact 'impress' of the divine nature and character. All that God is, Christ is. *William Lincoln: There is not a thought in the mind of God, but Christ is its expression; nor a glory in God, but Christ is its manifestation.*

It should be noted that there are two other fundamental and foundational statements in relation to the Person of the Lord Jesus which should be carefully pondered:

- He subsists in the 'form of God' (Philippians 2.6). 'Form' of God does not suggest bodily shape or external appearance, but relates to the manifestation of deity. He outwardly displays what He is inwardly and what He is in essence, that is **deity**. He is God.
- He is the 'image of the invisible God' (Colossians 1.15, cf. 2 Corinthians 4.4). Again, the word 'image' does not imply mere likeness or resemblance. The Lord Jesus is never said to be in the 'likeness' of God, for He is not *like* God, He **is** God. 'Image' suggests 'precise representation and manifestation'; He is the **perfect expression** of the **Father** (John 14.9). He is God. Note. Man is said to have been made in the 'image of God' (Genesis 1.27, 9.6, 1 Corinthians 11.7). This suggests that man was designed to be the visible representative of his Creator, to display the attributes of God. It is also the responsibility of believers to be moral representations of God's character. *Colossians 3.10: And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.* In glory, we shall adequately represent what Christ is, both spiritually and morally (cf. 1 Corinthians 15.49). *Romans 8.29: For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

(5) Christ is also presently 'upholding all things by the word of His power'. 'Upholding' has the idea of 'maintaining something that is in constant movement', a 'pilate' or 'steersman'. With a single word He sustains the physical laws of nature and the order of the universe. *Mark 4.39: And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.* Because of Him day follows night, tides ebb and flow and the moon orbits the earth. Serious 'global warming' is sure to take place, but only according to His word (2 Peter 3.12)! As for today: *Genesis 8.22: While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.*

(6) The writer now returns to consider the Son in relation to His work in the **past**: 'when He had (by Himself) purged our sins', or 'having made purification of sins'. Here, the work of the High Priest on the Day of Atonement (or Purification) is in view. The emphasis here is on 'purification' or 'cleansing'. This is greater than atonement which merely covers sins temporarily. In **Romans** sin is seen as *guilt* which requires **justification**. In **Hebrews** sin is *defilement* which requires **cleansing**.

'Having made purification' is in the **aorist** (or point) **tense**. This signifies a single, once for all, definite act which has present and lasting effects. *Hebrews 10.12: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins...* *1 Peter 3.18: For Christ also hath once suffered for sins...* The phrase is also in the **middle voice**, meaning that this was an act accomplished **in** and **for** Himself, i.e. this is a work He accomplished **alone** (in Himself) and a work which brings **glory** and full **delight** to Him (for Himself). *Isaiah 53.11: He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.*

Note. He has made purification '**of** sins', not just '**our** sins'. In a coming day the universe shall be cleansed of sins and their effects. *John 1.29: Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*

(7) After having accomplished the work at Calvary, He 'sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high'. 'Sitting down' suggests that His work in relation to Calvary is finished. Sitting on the 'right hand' is a position of blessing, glory and affection. This is the throne He presently shares with the Father, the One Who is the 'Greatness' in 'the heights' (Hebrews 8.1, Jude 25). **Note.** Rachel called her son **Benoni**, meaning 'son of my sorrow', a picture of Calvary. Jacob renamed him **Benjamin**, meaning 'son of my right hand', a picture of the position of glory and honour in which the Lord Jesus is now seated.

It is interesting to note the occasions in Hebrews when the Lord Jesus sits down. Here in Hebrews 1.3 the verb is **reflexive**, that is He has sat Himself down. It is His own act and His own right. In Hebrews 1.13 He sits down by divine ascent and in Hebrews 12.2 He sits down with the result that He remains seated. See also Hebrews 8.1, 10.12.

4 *Being made (having become) so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.*

In virtue of His being seated at the right hand of the Greatness in the heights, the Lord Jesus has 'become so much better than the angels'. This does not suggest He was ever inferior to angels, but rather He voluntarily took a position of humility in becoming a Man and a Servant. *Hebrews 2.9: But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death.* Following the suffering of death He has been exalted to His rightful and present place of glory. This is a position far superior to that of the angels ('so much better'). His present position of glory is because of **what He has done** and **who He is**, the Son.

Not only is the Lord Jesus superior to angels in the position He has assumed, but He is superior to them because of the 'more excellent' Name He has been given. This is the name of '**Son**' (see v.5).

The **Sonship** of the Lord Jesus is a most important subject. The significance of the name '**son**' is threefold:

- A son is a **distinct** person from his father (see John 5.19-22, 6.38-39).
- A son is the **heir** of his father, not the servant (Luke 20.14, Galatians 4.7, Hebrews 1.2).
- A son has the same **nature** as his father. When the Lord Jesus therefore claimed to be the Son of God he was claiming deity (Matthew 26.63-66, John 5.17-18, 10.33, 36).

It is a most wonderful fact to consider that as believers we are called 'sons of God' (1 John 3.1-2). We are heirs of God in Christ (Romans 8.17) and partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1.4). *1 John 3.1-2: Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

Hebrews 1.4 declares that the Lord Jesus received this name 'by inheritance'. Does this mean that there was a time when the Lord Jesus was *not* the Son? **NO!** That would mean there was a time when He was not divine. **Impossible! The Lord Jesus is the eternal Son of God.** He was the Son of God at creation for all things were created by Him and for Him (Colossians 1.13-17). Hebrews 1.2 declares that God has spoken to us in One whose eternal character is that of Son. John teaches that the Son perpetually dwells in the bosom of the Father. *John 1.18: No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*

In what way then has the Lord Jesus inherited 'a more excellent name'? Although the Sonship of the Lord Jesus had no beginning, it did have a **manifestation**. *1 John 3.8: For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.* Messianic Sonship is in view. The Lord Jesus has inherited in **time** what is true of Him **eternally**. He inherits as **Man** what is true of Him as **God**. So, this name He has inherited is 'more distinguished' and 'more eminent' than any angel's name. They might be called 'sons of God', but never 'my Son' (Hebrews 1.5).

In summary, the Lord Jesus is better:

- He is better than the **prophets** (vv.1-2) having brought a full and complete revelation.
- He is better than the **priests** (v.3) having accomplished His work and sat down.
- He is better than the **kings** (v.3) having seated Himself on God's throne (cf. 1.8).
- He is better than the **angels** (v.4) in virtue of His more excellent Name.