

Christ in All The Scriptures

Hebrews - Further Considerations

Introduction

I am sure that every individual who sits to muse on the first verses of Hebrews find themselves at a loss for words in conveying the richness of every expression, especially verses two and three. Immediately one is found to be in wonderment trying to grasp and be grasped by the depth and breadth of every clause. Neither is it discernible that one clause is more important than the other, for like a beautiful diamond with each facet gleaming, so are these expressions about our glorious Lord. Consequently, this attempt to enter into the profound truths utterly fails and all I can say is, "Such things are too wonderful for me; they are high, I cannot attain unto them".

It cannot be determined who the writer was for the simple reason God does not tell us. Nevertheless, it is evident it was an individual who had a deep insight into the wonders and glories of the Lord. This was not an individual writing a few truths nor was it one restating that which he had heard from others, or to a degree been taught by God. The writer had, in spirit, entered into the profound truths he wrote about. This was a spiritual giant for when all is said, it will be agreed that when consideration is given to the glorification and gloriousness of the Lord, few books can equal Hebrews. From the opening verse to the closing comments He is exalted and extolled in language which defies full appreciation or understanding.

- a) Four major themes are constantly interwoven:
 - i) His preeminence
 - ii) His permanence
 - iii) The perfections of both His person and the position He has and will have as the King Priest after the order of Melchizedec,
 - iv) The place in which He now functions.

- b) His priesthood is told in five different expressions, those being:
 - i) "Merciful and Faithful High Priest" (ch. 2:17)
 - ii) "Apostle and High Priest of our profession" (ch. 3:1)
 - iii) "Great High Priest" (ch. 4:14)
 - iv) "High Priest" (ch. 6:20)
 - v) "Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchizedec" (ch. 5:10)

- c) Due to the multi-avenues of manifestations of the Lord in Hebrews, which volumes have been written about, this paper will be limited to thoughts on the opening verses of the book.

The Text

The first major clause after the declaration of God being the speaker is the contrast between the prophets and the Lord. This sets the tone of the book for it is a series of contrasts between men and the Lord, the sacrifices they offered, and the places they occupy as High Priests.

It will be observed in the following quotations (ch. 1:1-3) that the verses are not written in verse form but rather in such a way to show the development of truths.

- a) "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,
Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son,
- b) Whom he hath appointed heir of all things,
- c) By whom also he made the worlds;
- d) Who being the brightness of his glory,
- e) And the express image of his person,
- f) And upholding all things by the word of his power,
- g) When he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high"

Immediately there is emphasized the truth of Christ being superior to the prophets, a statement which begs the question, "In what ways is Christ superior?" The response is there are many aspects in which the Lord was

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distinct and superior. For instance, they were sinful He was holy, but that which the Spirit emphasizes is they were plural, He is singular. He indicates His fulness against their partiality, but it is not drawn to its conclusion for the main focus is the singularity of the Lord. God spoke “by” (Gk. en”, “in”) the prophets and in the Son. They were the channels through which God spoke, but how superior were His communications? Being unreservedly holy He not only heard the voice of God distinctly, but delighted in listening to God which, according to the prophecy, He did “morning by morning” (Isa. 50:4).

Spoken Unto Us “By His Son”

Our first observation is the way this title of the Lord is given. It does not have the definite article, neither does it have a determinator nor preposition. While various reasons have been made for such and as the Son the Lord is distinct from all other sons, the emphasis is on the uniqueness of the glory of the One who is so described. Being the Son emphasized His deity as when He spoke of God as “His Father”, indicating a unique relationship. He is spoken of as the Son regarding:

- a) Creation (Col. 1:13, 16)
- b) Prediction (Psa. 2:7; Hos. 11:1; Lk. 1:32)
- c) Recognition (Jn. 1:49; Mk. 15:39)
- d) Declaration (Mk. 1:11; Matt. 17:5; Rom. 1:4)

The Sonship of the Lord is reiterated several times in Hebrews (ch. 1:5, 8; 2:6; 3:6; 4:14; 5:5, 8; 6:6; 7:28; 10:29) (10 times in total), and according to “Alford”, while not a perfect truth level but as close as one can get, it would be better said, “in His Son” (Heb. 1:2) understanding the full ramifications and truth in His “Sonship”.

Christ The Appointed Heir Of All Things

Immediately following the truth of the Sonship of the Lord is the truth that He is the Heir.

- a) It may have been that the writer had the parable when the Lord spoke of the Father who sent the Son and Heir (Matt. 21:37-38), or perhaps the servant who spoke to Rachel's family informing them of the only son of Abraham who was the heir of all the father had (Gen. 24:34-36).
- b) There is a blessed truth presented here that is so easily missed. Since God has determined him to be Heir of all things, no satanic energy and no human distortions can prevent that happening. Satan will give to the beast his power (Rev. 13); he will sit as God in the temple (2 Thess. 2:4); Satan will be worshipped (Rev. 13:4); and the world clamor crying, “Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?” (Rev. 13:4). Thank God there is a man far superior to the man of sin. The Lord will make war with the Beast and not only overcome him, but completely destroy him, casting him alive into a Lake of Fire (Rev. 19:20).
- c) As heir of all things Christ is superior to:
 - i) Solomon who was the appointed heir of the kingdom. Christ is the appointed Heir of all regal administrations of all places.
 - ii) Issac was the heir of all the father's possessions. Christ is the heir to all which belongs to God geographically and materially.
 - iii) Moses was the divinely appointed channel for the liberation of God's people from human slavery with its no hope low morale mindset. Christ is the appointed Channel for the liberation of His people from spirit and soul liberation and low morale (Gal. 5:1).
 - iv) Christ is the Heir of every aspect of glory.
 - v) The judges were all divinely appointed, so with Christ for all judgment and execution of judgment has been given into His hands. This opens Revelation.

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By Whom Also He Made The Worlds

The word “worlds”:

- a) There are three Greek words translated “world” in the KJV. They are:
 - i) “Kosmos” which indicates the orderly arrangement of the world
 - ii) “Aion” which indicates time periods
 - iii) “Oikoumene” which indicates the habitable world.

It is the word “aion” which is used in Hebrews chapter 1:2; 11:3 and is used of the “ages” (Col. 1:26; Eph. 2:7), which to my mind, in ch. 1:2 suits the context of Hebrews better than referring to the physical world, which it seems to me to indicate in ch. 11:3. As I read this clause in this context, the Lord is the maker of the various ages.

- d) This shows that Divine Persons in eternity past planned the developing of the “ages”. i.e., human government, law, grace, judgement, millennium, and that which we call dispensations. Consequently, to stand against the purpose of God in the changing from the age of law to grace; from animal sacrifices to the sacrifice of the Lord; from earthly priests who functioned in a structure of wood, cloths, and metals to the High Priest who officiates in Heaven; is an act of defiance and dishonoring to the Lord.

Who Being The Brightness Of Glory (Heb. 1:3)

The word “his” is in italics, showing that this was not original but added. Our Lord was not the reflection of divine glory but the effulgence of it. It was His glory which shone in its brightness on the mount of transfiguration (Matt. 17:2); that Ezekiel saw (Ezek. 1:4; 8:2); that Saul saw (Acts 26:13); and the beast when the Lord comes in judgment (2 Thess. 2:8).

“Who Being” - The Lord never became the brightness of glory as something that was developed by looking into the face of God. Paul informs us that as we gaze on the face of Jesus Christ we also are transfigured, that is, made more like the Lord (2 Cor. 4:6). Neither was it a brightness bestowed by God, but that eternal moral glory of His own perfections. That brilliance shone in uninterrupted undimishing brilliance. There was never a point when it began, neither will it ever end. It is timeless in duration. Brightness is the display of His essential glory and His deity. There is in the Lord the outshining of His glory in every aspect of His Person, Power, Prerogatives, Position, and Preeminence.

1) The Express Image Of His Person

- a) It would seem that the Holy Spirit is striving to find human wording to accentuate the unequalled splendor of the Lord. He is not only the “image” of God but the “express” image of His person.
- b) There are two basic Greek words translated “image”. They are “eikon” and “charakter”. A third word, “charagma”, is seldom used. The word used in this verse is “charakter” and means an impression, much like the likeness of an individual on coinage or paper currency. However, that image on the coinage is not the “very image” for it is a lifeless, non emotional piece of metal. By contrast, the Lord whilst being a distinct person from God who is the speaker, yet He is identical with Him in essential character and being. Every attribute God has, every prerogative God has, every iota of power God has, and every iota of the divine attributes is found in perfection in Christ. The hymn, “Thou art the everlasting Word, the Father’s only Son” was written correctly when the author penned the words, “true image of the infinite. . . brightness of uncreated light”. This is why the word translated “person” is better “substance”. The Lord was the exact image of the substance, the totality of all that God is.

2) Upholding All Things By The Word Of His Power

- a) The word translated “upholding” is used in a variety of contexts. Sometimes it means “to bear with” but the normal usage is, “to convey along”. It is used of the man who was brought who had palsy

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(Mk. 2:3), he was borne along by those who carried him; the women bringing the spices (Lk. 24:1), they bore them, carried them to the tomb; the disciples bringing the fish they caught (Jn. 21:10). The Lord is conveying along (bearing) the ages or dispensations along to their cumulation. The ones to whom the epistle was written needed to understand that the message being preached was not a radical new teaching thought up in the corridors of great religions or intellectual learning, it was a work of the One who was, is, and ever will be the “exact image of God’s essential being”.

- b) Furthermore, it was not by the power of human eloquence people were understanding and adhering to the message of Christ. It was by His powerful voice things were changing. That to which He is bringing all things was the fulfilling of the purpose of God, to “gather together in one all things in Christ” (Eph. 1:10) in the millennium. That would be accomplished by working along several fronts:
 - i) His taking the book of the earth’s government and justice
 - ii) The judgment on every manifestation of sinful man against God (Rev. chs. 6-19)
 - iii) His judgment on the leaders of wickedness on earth (2 Thess. 2:8; Rev. 19:17-21)
 - iv) His administration over all the earth (Zech. 14:9)
 - v) All being handed over to God that he may be all in all (1 Cor. 15:28)

3) When He Had By Himself Purged Our Sins

- a) Our first observation is that of contrast: he always was the Son, he ever was the “Brightness of Glory, the express image of His substance. He has always been the Conveyer of the ages along but now we read of something He did one for all and is eternal in its effective. He made purification for sins, that is, He laid the necessary foundation for our sins to be purged, that is put away.
- b) This is a stupendous truth. The provision of purification for sins was a work He alone could do. No angel could do this work, no sacrifice of the old economy could cleanse from sins, thus angels could not help, animal sacrifices could not effect. The only One who could do this was He who was the Son.

4) Sat Down On The Right Hand Of The Majesty On High

- a) I submit that the central emphasis is not that of a literal locality but His transcendent position to the highest heights of glory. He not only sat down but, while not mentioned here, He is ruling (Psa. 110:2).
- b) This is a truth repeated in the Scriptures with slightly different emphasis. I have listed some of them here for the individual to muse and ponder upon:
 - i) “Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven” (Matt. 26:64)
 - ii) “And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven” (Mk. 14:62)
 - iii) “Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand” (Acts 2:33, 34)
 - iv) “But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God” (Acts 7:55, 56)
 - v) “Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us” (Rom. 8:34)
 - vi) “Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places” (Eph. 1:20)
 - vii) “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God” (Col. 3:1)

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- viii) “Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Heb. 1:3)
- ix) “Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such a high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens” (Heb. 8:1)
- x) “But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God” (Heb. 10:12)
- xi) “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb. 12:2)
- xii) “Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him” (1 Pet. 3:22)

Concluding Thoughts

In musing on such an individual we ask, “who is he?” and the answer comes back, “He who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death” (Heb. 2:9), and is none other than “Jesus” (Heb. 2:9).

**May God grant us good understanding as He, by His Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.
John 16:13**

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