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## The Book of Hebrews – The Superiority of Christ

*...God has spoken to us in His Son...(Hebrews 1:2)*

Hebrews 1:2b-3

*...in these last days [God] has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. 3 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...*

This morning we come to our final description of the Son in the opening verses of the letter to the Hebrews. This final picture is actually the culmination or climax of all the other descriptions. If someone were to say to the previous six descriptions of the Son as Heir, as Creator, as the Outshining of God's glory, as the very Image and Substance of God, as the Sustainer and as the Purifier, "what does all this mean" or "what does this prove"? Our answer is given to us in this phrase, "*...He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high*" for here the Son is seen as the true Sovereign or King.

Now we need to regress for just a moment. Last week we looked at some thoughts that need repeating as they have a bearing upon what we are to learn from our text today. Remember that from the phrase, "*upholds all things by the word of His power*" pictures the Son as the Sustainer. All things exist, move and have their being by the utterance and command of the Son. We noted that this then was an act of divine providence, which is the work of God to direct all things to their divinely appointed goal.

Next we learned from the phrase, "*When He had made purification of sins...*" that the Son was the Sacrifice. The Son offered Himself as the means of purification for man, the process of being made right before God. We called this the act of divine purification, which is the work of God to call out and cleanse for Himself a people to bring Him glory.

So we have seen the Son as Sustainer and Sacrifice and the works of divine providence and divine purification. Now, at the close of verse three, we are to see the Son as the Sovereign, the ever active and ruling King. And as we come to explore this thought, we will see the act of divine pre-eminence, which, rather than a work, is actually the position of God as being first and of greatest importance over all things.

In the Son then we have Sustainer, Sacrifice and Sovereign. And remember then that with the these first two thoughts, I asked you the question, "Are you satisfied with the Son?" Have you learned to be content with how the Son providentially cares for and provides for you? Have you learned to be content with the Son as your one and only sacrifice for your sins? This means that you are trusting in what the Son alone has done to make you right with God.

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No amount of effort or work on our part earns us salvation. However the gift of salvation always, and I emphasize always, produces godliness and a longing to be more like Christ. To be sure it may wane from time to time, but if your life is not characterized by an increasing desire toward holiness, something is dreadfully wrong. You are not finding the Son to be satisfying and are choosing self over the Savior.

Now this morning then we ask a similar question as last week. Are you satisfied with the Son as the only true Sovereign, which means ruler and controller of all things? Is He the King of your realm; the Captain of your labors; the Lord of your life? As we will come to see, the Son is no partial Sovereign. Practically speaking, the Son is either to be Sovereign Lord of all our life or we make ourselves out to be somehow or somewhat sovereign in our lives.

Let us now take a look at this great and final picture of the Son as the Sovereign as presented in the letter to the Hebrews. Let us have open hearts and open minds to the Spirit of God, that He might conform us to the image of Christ. As an outline, we will learn from our text, “*sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high*” about -

- The Position of the Son
- The Prophecy of the Son
- The Purpose of the Son

## I. The Position of the Son

To begin with, we learn of the position of the Son, which comes as a direct result of His previous work of purification. Again, it says, “*When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.*” If we are to have a right thought about the current Sovereignty of the Son, we must first realize the circumstances that brought Him there, namely that the Son was the sacrifice for sin.

Last week we saw the contrast between the priests of the Old Testament, who had to make continual and daily and multiple sacrifices for both the sins of the people as well as their sins, versus the “once for all,” singular sacrifice of the Son. Now we are presented with another contrast between the priests of the Old Testament and of the Son. No Old Testament priest could or did sit down or rest in the Temple. There was always another sacrifice to be made – their work was never finished or complete. But now we are told that because the Son’s sacrifice was perfect and eternal, He could do what no other priest could do – He sat down – and, as we will learn from the book of Hebrews, He did not just sit down

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anywhere, under some tree, in a garden or on a terrace. No, He sat down at the throne of God, at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

We learn first of all of the greatness of this act. That the Son “sat down” then pictures a very formal, very dignified and purposeful action. The priest did not sit down, but the King did. In a sense, what we have here is the grand act of a King who has returned from a great and victorious battle over His enemies. All the in court stand as the King makes His way to the throne. And the people wait with anticipation for the King to sit down as it will mark for all that peace and rest have come. And so, here we have the Son, who has returned from His great and victorious defeat over Satan and death, providing for His people peace and reconciliation from sin. When the Son sits down, it signifies that rest has come. But this is not a rest from all labor and effort, but rather is a rest of satisfaction in the completed work of purification. It is a royal rest – a King seated upon His throne, surveying the result of His edicts, His decrees and His leadership upon His subjects. This is not a “sit in a lazy-boy and take a nap” kind of rest, but again is a rest of satisfaction in what has been accomplished and enjoying the fruits of that accomplishment.

So, we learn of the position of the Son. He is the returning King, taking His rightful and authoritative seat at the right hand of His Father. The Son does not sit at the right hand as someone less than the Father, but reigns and rules as a co-equal with His Father. To be on the right hand of the Majesty is to be in the place of honor, privilege and prerogative. The position of the Son is that of being exalted above all things. He is greater than the prophets and He is greater than the priests. He is, as the idea of “right hand” conveys in the Scriptures, simply an extension of the Majesty on high. The word for Majesty in the Greek is actually an adjective that when used of God becomes a title. It speaks of the greatness, importance or prominence or something or in this case someone. The Son is being given equal placement or footing with the only One who is ultimately great, exceeding important and most highly prominent over all creatures. So again, we learn of the deity of the Son.

When we are told here that the Son “sat down” we must see not only the greatness of the act, but also (secondly) the finality of the act. The verb “sat down” is in the Aorist tense in the Greek, indicating a one time and completed action. The Son did not and does not “sit down” only to have to get back up and perform the previous work of purification again and again. Rather, we are told that the Son, “sat down” once for all time. So just as the sacrifice of the Son was once for all, so to is the act of assuming the position at the right hand of God. In fact, this is an often repeated them in the book of Hebrews. Let’s take a tour.

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## **Hebrews 7:26-27**

**26 For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; 27 who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.**

## **Hebrews 9:11-12**

**11 But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; 12 and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.**

## **Hebrews 10:10-12**

**10 By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. 11 Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; 12 but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, **SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD.****

What are we to learn from all this? First, we are to be thankful that that no further sacrifices are needed or exists by which people might be made right with God. The Son, once and for all, offered a perfect and eternal sacrifice that according to Hebrews 7:25 is able to save completely or to the uttermost, all who by faith trust that the Son alone is the only sacrifice and who by faith trust that the Son will change their hearts and behavior by giving them His Spirit.

Secondly, since the Son has sat down, once for all, there is no worries or concerns to be had that someone or something can and will thwart the Son's purposes or usurp the Son's position upon the throne. Our salvation is as secure as the Son's position upon the throne because it was at the end of paying for our salvation that the Son permanently assumed His place at the right hand of the Majesty on high. There will be no divine coops – the Son will reign forever and ever – Hallelujah!

## **II. The Prophecy of the Son**

If we are to rightly appreciate this comment about the Son being the Sovereign, we must see that this position of the Son is the direct fulfillment of prophecy. Turn with me to Psalm 110. Psalm 110 is known as a Messianic

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Psalm. Messianic means that it speak of or points to the Messiah or Christ. This psalm was written by King David some 1,000 years before Jesus Christ. The author of Hebrews refers to Psalm 110:1 and 4 nine times in this letter. Right now we are concerned with only verse 1 of Psalm 110 which reads;

***The LORD says to my Lord: “Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.”***

The basic truth of this verse is this – God the Father is speaking to God the Son and calling the Son back to glory after the shame and suffering of His earthly life. The Father is saying in effect, “Son, you have brought about salvation for Your people by giving Your life upon the cross. Now, because You have been obedient, even to the point of death on a cross, I will exalt You back from this lower position on earth, to Your previous position at My right hand. And as You fulfill Your role as Priest – King for Your people, I will prepare the rest of those who have rejected You for final and divine judgment.” This then is a prophecy, a divine utterance of the Lord given beforehand which will go to prove the trustworthiness and accuracy of the Lord.

Now, with this 1,000 year old prophecy given, how do we know that it is to be applied specifically to the Son, that is to Jesus Christ. The answer to this question is found in the Luke 22. In Luke 22, we have Jesus Christ, just hours before His crucifixion, being tried by the Sanhedrin, the ruling council of Jewish Leaders. Let’s pick up the account in verse 66

## ***Luke 22:66-70***

***66 When it was day, the Council of elders of the people assembled, both chief priests and scribes, and they led Him away to their council chamber, saying, 67 “If You are the Christ, tell us.” But He said to them, “If I tell you, you will not believe; 68 and if I ask a question, you will not answer. 69 But from now on THE SON OF MAN WILL BE SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND of the power OF GOD.” 70 And they all said, “Are You the Son of God, then?” And He said to them, “Yes, I am.”***

In verse 66 Jesus says in effect, the time of My death is upon Me. I will die and fulfill all that is written about Me in the Scriptures and from now (this time of by crucifixion and subsequent glorification) the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God. Jesus then directly applied the statement of Psalm 110:1 to Himself.

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The question before us then is this – does this prophecy find fulfillment in the Son? And now we have come full circle for another of the themes that is threaded throughout the book of Hebrews is the fulfillment of Psalm 110:1 in the Person of the Son.

## **Hebrews 1:3**

***When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,***

## **Hebrews 8:1**

***Now the main point in what has been said is this: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,***

## **Hebrews 10:12**

***but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD,***

## **Hebrews 12:2**

***fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.***

This theme of the Son being seated at the right hand of God is not unique to the book of Hebrews as the book of Acts (2:33), Ephesians (1:20-22), and 1 Peter (3:22) all point to Christ in the same way. And look with me at Revelation 3:21 were we read of an absolutely awesome promise based upon the Son's fulfilling Psalm 110:1,

## **Revelation 3:21**

***He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.***

Does this not give a whole new dimension and understanding to Hebrews 4:16 which says,

## **Hebrews 4:16**

***Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.***

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This is the very command and invitation of the Sovereign – draw near to My throne and receive mercy and find grace. Do we need mercy and grace? The Sovereign beckons you to come to Him. Are you satisfied with the Son as King? Let's make this a bit more personal, are you satisfied with the Son and your King – your Sovereign? Are you ready and desirous to take all things to lay before His feet. We know that in glory we will take what we have and cast it before Him. But why wait until then. May the Lord truly be Lord of our lives – today.

### III. The Purpose of the Son

So we end on a note of application with this phrase, *“He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”* Remember that I said being seated had the idea of rest – not rest in a rejuvenating sense, but rest in a sense of satisfaction as the King looks upon His subjects and sees how they fare under His rulership.

Although we might like to think that sitting on a throne in royal garb would be “the life,” true kingship carries great responsibility and therefore requires great ability. The Son sitting or resting upon the throne is not a passive, inactive lounging, but if rather a proactive and purposeful duty of the Son. The Son is revealed to be busy while upon the throne, busy carrying out the goals of His inheritance. He is not some idle King, but One who is actively engaged in the things which affect our lives. While we do not have time to consider all of the Son's present ministries as Sovereign, let me point out a few of them as they are revealed in the book of Hebrews.

1. The Sovereign Son is the Sustainer of all things, including the Church, by the word of His power (Hebrews 1:3).

We have already well considered this ongoing ministry of Christ to carry along all things to their appointed ends. The Apostle Paul makes a similar recognition of this work of the Son in Ephesians 1:20-22 which says;

#### ***Ephesians 1:20-22***

***“...which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. 22 And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church...”***

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## 2. The Sovereign Son is our Great High Priest (Hebrews 4:14-16)

**14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. 16 Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.**

As our High Priest, the Son is able to provide to His followers at least three divine blessings. The first is **succor** – which means relief or aid. The second is **sympathy** – or an ability to understand what we go through as human being struggling with sin. And the third is **salvation** – or deliverance, both as we first come into a relationship with Christ and then day by day as we seek to put away more and more sin in order to be more and more like Christ.

## 3. The Sovereign Son intercedes for us (Hebrews 7:25; Romans 8:34)

One of the present ministries of the Son is intercession on our behalf to the Father. Those who believe in and practice prayer are always encouraged to know that others are praying for them. What can be a greater encouragement than to know that the Son, the very Sustainer, Sacrifice and Sovereign of the universe is interceding – speaking on your behalf before the Father. Both the author of Hebrews and the Apostle Paul make this connection in the Word of God.

### **Hebrews 7:25**

**Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.**

### **Romans 8:34**

**who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.**

## 4. The Sovereign Son prepares a place for His people (John 14:2; Hebrews 2:10)

Most of us are familiar, maybe too familiar with this idea that the Son has been working on a place for us in glory for the past two thousand years. May the consideration cause us to praise Him all the more.



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## **John 14:2-3**

**2 In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. 3 If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.**

## **Hebrews 2:10**

**For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings.**

This is our Savior. This is our Sovereign. This is our God. The Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Do these things satisfy you? Let me give you two words of application as we close.

First, do you have **confidence** in the Son? According to the Word of God, the Son has done all things perfectly and therefore He is permanently seated as Sovereign on the throne of God. Nothing will shake or move Him from His position as Savior and Sovereign. Do you trust Him as Savior? Have you recognized your inability to please and live for God on your own? Are you ready to come to Him and Him alone for salvation? Do you trust Him as Sovereign? We often give lips service of devotion and commitment to God, but what areas of your life have you yet to surrender? Identify some and take them to Him in prayer.

The second word is **consecration**. Just a moment ago I said the Son has done all things perfectly, so much so He could sit down. Now I ask you, will you, by prayer and effort, commit to doing what He has said to you as “perfectly” as He enables you? This is consecration, being set apart for God. Ask Him to direct you as to what He wants you to accomplish and set your heart on this day and in the days to come. May the Son truly become your one and only Sovereign in whom you are most satisfied.

## **Soli Deo Gloria**

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