

The Glory of Christ

Hebrews 1:1-4

We begin our Christmas series today on the Glory of Christ – four messages in all.

Next Sunday we will look at Philippians 2 and the glory of Christ's Humiliation. Following Christmas, the Glory of Christ's Fullness in Colossians 1. And Lord willing, at the beginning of the New Year, the Glory of His Second Coming in Revelation 1.

But today we begin with the simple title, the Glory of Christ, in Hebrews 1.

Isaac Watts wrote:

*Join all the glorious names of wisdom, love, and pow'r,
that ever mortals knew, that angels ever bore:
all are too poor to speak his worth,
too poor to set my Savior forth.*

How great Jesus is! We want the pure words of Scripture to tell us of His glory – a glory that even eternity cannot contain!

We could very well have chosen a similar passage in John 1. But we instead have chosen the Hebrews passage.

John 1 tells us Jesus is God; Hebrews has God speaking to Jesus and calling Him God!

John 1 tells us Jesus is the Word and His glory as the only begotten Son of God; but Hebrews calls Jesus the very radiance of God's glory,

the brightness of God to us, as well as the exact representation of God's image in full!

John 1 has Jesus being the Maker of all things; nothing made apart from Him that was made and enlightening every man; but Hebrews speaks Jesus not only being the Creator but the Sustainer of everything!

And John tells us wonderfully of the fullness of grace and truth in Jesus; that those who receive him have the highest right of all – to be called the children of God. But Hebrews 1 tells us we are set above angels in Christ, that Jesus has purified us from all of our sins, and is seated now at the right hand of God, the highest station of all – to be our Lord and our Redeemer!

Hebrews is the single most important Bible book as to the relationship of the OT and the NT. It should not surprise us where it begins, with how God spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, in a variety of seasons and ways, and has in these last days, in this new and final period, spoken by His Son.

We should realize that in a very real sense, it was the Son who spoke in and through the prophets of old! And these all pointed to Christ, his coming, his sufferings and the glory to follow.

But now God speaks to us in the revelation OF His Son, in this supernal way, showing us the person and work of Jesus His Son come in the flesh!

This passage is worthy of several sermons, and a Christmas series was preached over 10 years ago here on the Seven Majesties of Christ.

We will have to be more brief and see first how all these descriptions are meant to boost our confidence in him as the revelation of God's saving Son. In other all of these qualities are flowing down into his finished work for us, regarding the purification from our sins and his being seated at the right hand of the majesty on high, as our Lord and Savior over all.

We might see all these qualities of the Son as so many full and rich bullet points on his resume – so much glory and perfection to be the Christ, to be your perfect Savior. Everything is driving forward to our receiving Him as our remedy for sin. Everything is driving forward that we would bow the knee before his highest glory in heaven; that we would take our place with angels who adore Him!

We take the first of three couplets in His preciousness to God the Father, as He is called the Son and the appointed heir of all things.

We will see in Philippians 2 that he became a servant. But servants are not so great as sons in the Bible. God has not spared his very best in being sent for you to save you, you lost and condemned in your sins. He did not send to us a great angel or another perfect man or another Moses, or Aaron.

He sent one who is in every sense a Son! And as a Son, he is heir of all things! All things are God's, and He gives all things to whom He pleases. This says God the Father has willed that all the glory and majesty be placed in this Heir, and that all things are for his only begotten Son!

We hear shades of Psalm 2, of the Lord's giving all to His anointed, His Christ, His Son. This very Psalm is quoted in Hebrews 1.5 and 6 (read). And then His heirship is seen in 8-9 (read).

This intimacy and fullness of the Father and the Son, the all things being given to Jesus as appointed heir, are all opened to you in this first paragraph! Everything not only in Hebrews flows from this mountaintop; everything of redemption, salvation, heaven, life in glory and eternal blessings!

This is at the heart of our salvation being Divine – of God – not of ourselves. And what an amazing, incomprehensible humbling took place on God's part in giving us His Son! What grace! What kindness beyond words! Angels gasp and strain to understand it! And oh, what love!

One of the most staggering verses in all the Bible is in John 15, when Jesus tells us that the love with which He is loved by the Father, is the same love with which He loves you! He gives and shares with you this kingdom of God and of Jesus, a kingdom of love and life. And therefore, love one another as He has loved you!

Well, that is one sermon! Now there is a second couplet to be seen here, but it is separated. See at the end of verse 2 and in the middle of verse 3. The Savior Son and Heir is the Same who created all things, and who upholds all things by the Word of His power. Do you see those two things?

Though Jesus the Son takes on Himself our creation, our human nature at Christmas, He is ever above the creation and He is the power that made and sustains all things.

This also is expanded in Hebrews 1. See the quote in 1:10-12 (read). He is far, far greater than all of these far-flung creations of the universe, as He has made them all!

Listen to these lines from an ancient sermon on Christmas, preached 1600 years ago!

He, through whom time was made, was made in time.

And He, older by eternity than the world itself, was younger in age than many of His servants in the world.

He, who made man, was made man.

He was given existence by a mother whom He brought into existence.

He was carried in hands which He formed.

He nursed at breasts which He filled.

He cried like a babe in the manger in speechless infancy – this Word without which human eloquence is speechless!

-Augustine, Sermon on Christmas

The One who saves you, redeems you by Himself, is the one whose hand made all things, keeps all things, and will end all things. There is no safer hand imaginable!

He is the wisdom of God in creation, the power of God in creation, the very life of life to all the world, and the light of light; your all in all. It seems too much that to save a little worm man, the mighty hand of the Creator would stoop so low to pick us up. It seems so dissimilar – the infinite rescues the finite, the eternal the time-bound; but so it is.

Only God can redeem. Only God can forgive sin. Only God can restore those who have sinned against Him. Only God can provide a

righteousness which pleases Him! And that God is the Father, the Son AND the Holy Spirit!

What a Savior! How glorious is the Son! His right hand makes worlds; his left hand keeps world; his hands save all who rest in them, pierced as they were for us, that none can snatch us from the life He holds in his palms!

See again, what a sermon is here – a second or third sermon!

Now the next couplet separates the two we just saw. The Son, the heir of all things is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His nature.

Here we go from what the Son does as Creator and Lord over all; to what the Son IS in his divine nature, His divine person.

The Father's glory shines forth in the face of His Son, Jesus Christ. We are told that all the fullness of the godhead bodily is to be found in all in Him. The revelation of the Father is specially committed to His Son incarnate, so that to see the Son is to see the Father! To have the Son is to have the Father! And no wonder that we are to honor the Son as we honor the Father. Jesus said in John 14: You believe in God, believe also in Me!

The Hebrew Christians were tempted to look back to the Shekinah glory of the tabernacle, to look back to Moses and Aaron. But here is God in the flesh, tenting with us, substantially, a true and full expression of the King eternal, immortal, invisible, whom eye has not seen nor can see, says John Brown.

He is the essential image of the Father, and the representative image of God. In the Son's Person, and especially as the Incarnate Immanuel – God with us – God the Father and the Spirit shine forth.

“He is glorious in Himself, in His Godhead, and in His humanity, and in the union of both in His Person.

He is glorious in His offices of Mediator – Prophet, Priest and King of His Church.

He is glorious in His atonement, His righteousness, and His intercession [the major themes of this Epistle to the Hebrews].

He is glorious in his grace and truth, His person and love, and his cause and salvation.” Jonathan Anderson, Glasgow

Our salvation must be wrought by God, or it cannot be real or true. And yet our Savior must be one with us. Becoming an angel will not draw near enough to be our representative and head.

Oh what wonders here! Fully God, fully Man! God has come to earth! The Son of God became the son of man, that the sons of men might be made the sons of God!

Again, here is another three or four sermons – the deity of Christ, the humanity of Christ, the two in mysteriously in one Person, and the same doing all of His saving work according to the two natures united for us!

All of this flows into the conclusion of our message. What a Savior to make purification for all of our sins! The priesthood, offerings, tabernacle and instruments of the Levitical priest could never save us in themselves! His precious blood as the Lamb of God, the eternal

priest after another order than Levi, and in a sanctuary that is above – this is all his attainment!

What a finale in Him! That he is now finished with his atoning work, his sacrificial work, his redeeming work, his reconciling work, and is enthroned on high, at the very highest, in the throne of God, as Lord of lords, Lord of all!

Third here, his name and station inherited as the Son incarnate and risen, lifted up above all the angels in glory! Think of that! The glory of Christ is a matchless glory. His glory outshines all the glory of all the angels combined! And you are joint-heirs with Him!

All the evil angels – these enemies all which in verse 13 are placed beneath his feet – cannot overthrow Him or you who are hidden in Him!

As Hebrews 2 outlines, He is our greater Adam, with a far, far greater dominion promised Him than all that was lost in Adam the First. Indeed, He possesses greater than what was promised to Adam in the first place;

*In him the tribes of Adam boast,
more blessings than their father lost!*

Three brief applications now follow:

1. Do you know this glorious Christ? We are to be changed into His image from glory to glory. And that comes from the Word shining upon us as we hold fellowship with him, by the Spirit, by faith, in the holy of holies above. Oh how sure that Word! Read Heb. 2:1-3!

2. Do we boast in anything like we boast in Him? He is made unto you of God wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. Let no man boast in anything; but let him boast, let him glory in the Lord!
3. Worship! Our salvation is not purely negative, saving us from something. It includes that, saving us from sin, guilt, shame, wrath, judgment and hell. But it is more. Jesus brings us to heaven. He accepts us now. The judgment is fulfilled in him and he right now honors you, counts you his friends. You are the children of God, and both righteous and holy in the Lord! Therefore live by faith! Live lives of worship to Him! I wish to close with these words from the close of Hebrews – 12:18-24, 28.