

THIS LORD'S DAY

Sermon Title: *"The Glory of Christ": The Book of Hebrews*

Pastor Charles R. Biggs

Scripture Lesson: Colossians 1:15-20; 2 Corinthians 3:5-18

Scripture Text: Hebrews 1:1-4

Theme of Worship Service: Let us behold the glory of Christ in His pre-incarnate, incarnate, and post-incarnate states, learning to worship and serve Him as our sufficient God and Savior!

(Important note: The use of the language "post-incarnate" above is meant in no way to suggest that Christ is no longer incarnate, but to stress and accentuate the redemptive-historical "movement" of Christ's work from humiliation to exaltation; Christ is now exalted in glory in our human nature. The emphasis in these three states or phases of Christ's work is from a historical point of view). We confess that the only redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who being the eternal Son of God, *became* man, and so *was, and continues to be, God and man* in two distinct natures and one Person forever" (Q. 21- Westminster Shorter Catechism).

The author of Hebrews is like this: "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house, who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old." – **Jesus, Matt. 13:52**

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth." - ^{ESV} **John 1:14**

"We as fallen men, ignorant, guilty, polluted, and helpless, need a Savior who is a prophet to instruct us; a priest to atone and to make intercession for us; and a king to rule over and protect us. And the salvation which we receive at his hands includes all that a prophet, priest, and king in the highest sense of those terms can do. We are enlightened in the knowledge of the truth; we are reconciled unto God by the sacrificial death of His Son; and we are delivered from the power of Satan and introduced into the kingdom of God; all of which supposes that our Redeemer is to us at once prophet, priest and king." – Charles Hodge (Systematic Theology, 2:461).

"Who is the Redeemer of God's elect? A. The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ,(1) who, being the eternal Son of God, became man,(2) and so was, and continueth to be, God and man in two distinct natures, and one person, for ever.(3) (1)1 Tim. 2:5,6. (2)John 1:14; Gal. 4:4. (3)Rom. 9:5; Luke 1:35; Col. 2:9; Heb. 7:24,25." – Westminster Shorter Catechism 21.

"What offices doth Christ execute as our Redeemer? A. Christ, as our Redeemer, executeth the offices of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king, both in his estate of humiliation and exaltation.(1) (1)Acts 3:21,22;

Heb. 12:25 with 2 Cor. 13:3; Heb. 5:5,6,7; Heb. 7:25; Isa. 9:6,7; Matt. 21:5; Ps. 2:8-11.” – Westminster Shorter Catechism 23.

WCF 8.1 It pleased God, in His eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, His only begotten Son, to be the Mediator between God and man;(1) the Prophet,(2) Priest,(3) and King;(4) the Head and Saviour of His Church;(5) the Heir of all things;(6) and Judge of the world;(7) unto whom He did from all eternity give a people, to be His seed,(8) and to be by Him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified.(9) (1)Isa. 42:1; 1 Pet. 1:19,20; John 3:16; 1 Tim. 2:5. (2)Acts 3:22. (3)Heb. 5:5,6. (4)Ps. 2:6; Luke 1:33. (5)Eph. 5:23. (6)Heb. 1:2. (7)Acts 17:31. (8)John 17:6; Ps. 22:30; Isa. 53:10. (9)1 Tim. 2:6; Isa. 55:4,5; 1 Cor. 1:30.

Memorize with your family Shorter Catechism, Question and Answer 21 and Hebrews 1:1-4.

Read 2 Corinthians 3:5-18 and meditate upon how the New Covenant surpasses the glory of the Old Covenant. Do you regularly meditate upon and ponder the glory of God revealed in Christ? (2 Cor. 4:6)

Hymns

- 1. 310 - Rejoice the Lord is King**
- 2. 58 - O Splendor of God's Glory Bright**
- 3. 305 - Arise, My Soul, Arise**
- 4. Gloria Patri - 734**

Introduction

Christ is breathtaking in His glorious beauty! The Psalmist pondered the glory of God and His power in Psalm 63.

We are taught in the fullness of the New Covenant that the full glory of God is revealed in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 4:6).

What is God’s glory? John Brown helpfully defines:

"The glory of God is the supreme beauty of His perfections. His holy, wise, and benignant Excellency--that moral goodness, without which omnipotence, eternity, and immensity, would be awful, but not lovely. This perfect glory, this complete divine majesty, resides in Christ, and shines forth from Him, so that He is the communicator of its knowledge and enjoyment to mankind." – John Brown

The glorious invisible God, full of grace, holiness, power, and truth, is revealed to us in all His fullness in Jesus Christ. When we see Jesus, we have seen the Father (John 14:9). Jesus said: “I and the Father are one.” Christ’s glory is His beauty, moral excellence, wonderful-ness, His God-ness, and what makes Him the Great God and Savior. He is in His person the full revelation of God. In Christ, all the fullness of the Deity dwelt bodily (Col. 2:9).

Jesus' prayer before His excruciating crucifixion for our sins, prayed that His people would behold His glory (John 17:24); this was our Lord Jesus' concern, hope, and prayer as He took up His cross to go the via Dolorossa, to lay down His life for us:

^{ESV} John 17:24 Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

The Apostle Paul tells us that the glory revealed in Christ Jesus surpasses the glory of the Old Covenant because it is the full glory of Jesus that is revealed; the Old Covenant was intended to point forward to the full manifestation of God's glory to come in Jesus. Paul teaches us that as we gaze upon Christ's glory by faith, we are transformed from one degree of glory to the next (2 Cor. 3:6-18).

But is the glory of Christ what we spend time meditating upon? Should we not think more specifically about the glory of Christ? What do we spend our time thinking about? What we spend our time thinking the most about 'IS' our glory. It is not that we will have no glory to look upon, we were built for glory; rather, it is that our glory will be too small, and very unsatisfying.

Let us gaze upon, and ponder the glory of God in the face of Jesus as He is revealed in Hebrews 1:1-4, particularly verse 3. In three points:

- 1) The Glory of Christ in His Person**
- 2) The Glory of Christ in His Offices**
- 3) The Glory of Christ in His Saving Grace to Sinners**

1. The Glory of Christ in His Person

- a. There are seven important things taught about Christ's glorious person in this passage (just as there will be seven scriptures threaded together one-by-one to show scripturally how Jesus is superior to angels in 1:5-13).
 - i. Christ is heir of all things
 - ii. Christ made the world
 - iii. Christ is the radiance of the glory of God
 - iv. Christ is the exact imprint of God's nature
 - v. Christ upholds the world by the word of His power
 - vi. Christ made purification for sins
 - vii. Christ sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high.
- b. We see that Christ is God in the flesh. Christ's Person is revealed in three stages or phases:

- i. **Pre-incarnate as the Glorious Creator and Redeemer-** “Equal with God in power and glory” “God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God...”
 - ii. **Incarnate Lord and Servant-** Made purification for sins, heir of all things, exalted to the highest throne and given the highest, most glorious Name above every other name! (Phil. 2:3-11).
 - iii. **Post-Incarnate Prophet, Priest and King-** Exalted to God’s right hand to rule and reign over heaven and earth. Post-incarnate is lisping to accentuate that Christ is now exalted in our human nature and has been declared to be, and inherited an exalted position upon completion of His work (cf. Romans 1:2-4; Heb. 1:4). Christ is glorified in our human nature, and will always be God and man, but he is no longer in an estate of humiliation as in his incarnation, but is now exalted (the emphasis is historical).
- c. The uniqueness of Jesus’ Sonship is also taught clearly to from three perspectives:
- 1) Jesus’ relation to all created things; 2) Jesus’ relation to God’s glory; 3) Jesus’ relation to our human sin (see Hywel Jones, Hebrews commentary).
 - Hebrews 1:3: Jesus is replica and representation of God Almighty; “Radiance” stresses Jesus’ oneness with the Father; “exact imprint” his distinction from, or otherness as the Son rather than the Father (Triune theology).
 - “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1ff); We should note the unique equality of Christ with God, in all His essence and power and glory, as well as the distinctness in His Person as Son.
- d. In the Old Covenant there were glimpses of Christ in His glory, that has now been fully revealed and that makes the Father known (Isaiah 6:1-5; cf. John 12:40-42; Ezekiel 1:26-28; John 1:14, 18). Jesus is full of grace and truth and “exegetes” the Father, that is, makes the only and Living God fully known.
- e. As we search the Scriptures, let us look for Christ, and behold His glory; let us see God caring for His people in Christ, revealing the fullness of His love, and His mercy to us in Jesus. Providing Himself to make us His own. Rejoice!!

2. The Glory of Christ in His Offices

- a. Christ is Prophet: Christ speaks God’s will to us.
 - i. Implications:

- Christ-centered preaching as taught in Luke 24:24ff; 44-48; not merely sermons about Christ, but the Bible preaches Christ; we should preach Christ as the author of Hebrews preaches Christ.
 - Christ is the heart of all revelation: from Adam to Moses to Tabernacle, etc.
- b. Christ is Priest: Christ represents us before God; we have one who stands serving as our Eternal Priest, who offers Himself as the final and ultimate sacrifice that all other priest and sacrifices pointed toward in the Old Covenant.
 - c. Christ is King: Let us serve Him. Christ is the king greater than David; David's own son and heir to His eternal throne (2 Sam. 7:12-18).

3. The Glory of Christ in His Saving Grace to Sinners

- a. "After making purification for sins..."—Christ cleanses us from our sins by His precious blood (see Isa. 53).
- b. The "problem" of God's glory (from sinful man's point of view), His magnificent beauty and revelation of Himself, was unsafe and downright dangerous for a sinner to behold and get close to (see Isaiah 6). God's presence was "holy ground" and our shoes had better come off quickly in submission and repentance! God looked upon our problem, and with eyes of pity and compassion toward His own, covenanted with His Son to redeem a people. To bring a people close, through cleansing, by cleansing them and purifying them by the precious blood of Christ.
- c. Now sinners can come through Christ, with submission and repentance, to behold God's glory and to be transformed into His glorious and beautiful image. We are being transformed from one degree of glory to the next (2 Cor. 3:18)! God is remaking us!!
- d. We need cleansing and purification from our sins in order that we might be reconciled to a Holy and Glorious God and be partakers of His gracious salvation.
- e. Our cleansing from our sins continues throughout our lives; we are being transformed from one degree of glory to the next, implying a continuing, progressive sanctification (2 Cor. 3:17-18; cf. Phil. 1:6; 1 John 3:1-3).
- f. One day we shall see Him face to face (1 John 3), until then we are filled with joy inexpressible and fullness of glory as we love Him and serve Him by faith (1 Pet. 1:8-9).

What a Savior! Let us worship and adore Him. Let us meditate upon His greatness and behold His glory by faith. Do you see the glory of Christ? Do you behold His beauty and glory by faith?

By God's grace, fight for a daily contemplation of this glorious Savior, knowing that He has come near to you because of His love, to cleanse you, renew you, remake you, and bring you back to God so that you could find the purpose for which you were created, and so that Jesus could fulfill your deepest longings and all of your heartfelt and noble desires could be met by the God who made you in His image.

In Christ's love,

Pastor Biggs