

The Son's Seven Superiorities  
Hebrews 1:2-3

January 26, 2014

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<sup>A</sup> 1 John 4:2

<sup>B</sup> John 4:34, 5:30, 6:38-40; Hebrews 10:3, 7

<sup>C</sup> Hebrews 13:8, Matthew 11:27, Psalm 78:71

<sup>D</sup> 1 John 2:15; John 1:3; Colossians 1:16; Revelation 3:14

<sup>E</sup> Exod 16:10, Ezek 1:28, 11:23; John 1:4, 9, 14; 2:11; 12:27-28; Matt 17:2

<sup>F</sup> John 12:45, 14:9; Colossians 1:15, 2:9; 2 Corinthians 4:4

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<sup>G</sup> Colossians 1:17

<sup>H</sup> 1 Peter 2:24; Hebrews 9:12

<sup>I</sup> Ephesians 1:20-22; 1 Corinthians 15:24-26

—{1}. **Hebrews 1:2-3. . . . . The Son's Seven Superiorities**

A. Introduction

1. Some Elevated Thoughts

a. Do you know why mountain climbers rope themselves together? To prevent the sensible ones from going home.—{2}.

b. the highest point on Prince Edward Island is at the community of Glen Valley at 142 (?) metres above sea level; however that is still higher than the highest natural points in Delaware and Florida

c. Maureen and I when we were younger – quite a bit younger – loved to go camping and hiking in the mountains.

(A) Very early we discovered that it is far harder to cook potatoes and rice in boiling water in the mountains. That is because the temperature at which water boils is much lower in such rarified air

(B) Something else you quickly learn in hiking mountain paths is that you place your steps with care – a mistake can be costly

d. today we come to a mountain-peak of truth

(A) so that we must take some care as to how we step

(1) lest in discovering and grasping one great truth

(2) we leave go and abandon another truth equally important

(3) so that first we remember that, in the words of the Nicene Creed of 325AD, the '... Lord Jesus Christ, (is) the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father ...'

(4) and yet, to continue, He, ... for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was made man, ...

(5) or in other words, the Son of God, in His incarnation as Jesus, the Christ, never ceased being God, and yet he truly was man, for as 1 John 4:2 says, "By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God"

(B) let us then enter the rarified air of Hebrews 1:2-3

- (1) trusting that what we see in these verses leaves us exhilarated
- (2) but not, I pray, hopelessly gasping for breath!

## B. Superior Respecting God's Decrees

### 1. The Father's Will

- a. remembering that God the Son never ceased being God when he took on the form of man as the Lord Jesus Christ, think on Jesus' words
  - (A) "Jesus \*said to them, 'My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work.'" (John 4:34)
  - (B) "I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me." (John 5:30)
  - (C) "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day." (John 6:38-40)
- b. in these words we see that the determination and expression of the will of God – His counsels and His decrees – is invested in God the Father
- c. 'so while entering the world, He (Christ) says, ... "Lo, I am come to do your will, O God, as in the scroll of the book it is written concerning me.'" (Hebrews 10:3, 7; RGH)
- d. it is with respect to carrying out these expressed decrees of God the Father that God the Son is shown superior to all others

### 2. Heir

'Son, whom He appointed heir of all things' 1:2

- a. at first sight that word appointed seems strange
  - (A) for "'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.'" (Hebrews 13:8)
  - (B) but in this context, with that verb 'appointed' we are taken out of time into eternity, and so the normal human idea of flow of events one after another have to be abandoned
  - (C) rather, by an eternal, singular decree, God the Father establishes that the Son, as a natural aspect of His Sonship, is also heir

- (D) moreover, we need to go a step further, that in this case word heir does not in itself require that there be the death of another before Jesus as heir comes into His inheritance
- (E) rather, it is the root idea of the word: to take legal control of one's rightful possessions, to take hold of one's belongings
- b. So the Son is heir, and is always heir; at no time was He not heir
  - (A) and what are His rightful possessions?
  - (B) Jesus Himself claimed them: "All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him." (Matthew 11:27)
  - (C) as a result of being Son of the Father, He is heir to 'all things'
  - (D) and that certainly includes what is described in the next part of this verse: the created universe
  - (E) even as the OT calls Israel, the people of God, 'His inheritance' (Ps 78:71), so the Son is heir to the new creation of those who are in Christ Jesus, the re-created universe, and the world to come
  - (F) but now, let us consider Him as

### 3. Creator

'Son, ... through whom also He made the world' 1:2

- a. the usual word for 'world' in the NT is kosmos,
  - (A) which has a special emphasis on the physical place in which man has been placed,
  - (B) often with the spiritual overtone that as a result of sin, we live as fallen man in a fallen and spoiled world, so we are told
  - (C) "Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 John 2:15)
- b. but the word here for 'world' is aiones (English = aeons)
  - (A) which describes the universe in terms of both time and space
  - (B) as being brought into being by the command, 'Let there be light'
  - (C) whose operation is governed by physical laws established by God
- c. and the Son is consistently named in the NT as the agent whereby God brought the universe into being
  - (A) "All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being." (John 1:3)

- (B) "For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things have been created through Him and for Him." (Colossians 1:16) – He is heir of what He created, 'for Him'
- (C) "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning (i.e., ruler, efficient cause) of the creation of God, says this: « »" (Revelation 3:14)

### C. Superior in Relation to God

#### 1. Glory

'Son, ... And He is the radiance of His glory' 1:3

- a. in the Scriptures when the glory of God is revealed, it is usually as a visual phenomenon; with the beauty and brilliance of light
  - (A) "It came about as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the sons of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud." (Exodus 16:10)
  - (B) "As the appearance of the rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the surrounding radiance. Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell on my face and heard a voice speaking." (Ezekiel 1:28)
- b. that glory is the mark of the active presence of God in Ezekiel 11:23, "The glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city and stood over the mountain which is east of the city."
- c. in this verse in Hebrews we find that the Son radiates that glory
  - (A) John 1:4, 9 describe Jesus with these words 'In Him was life; and the life was the light of men, And the light shines in the darkness ... the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.'
  - (B) of course our minds naturally turn to the mount of transfiguration "And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light." (Matthew 17:2)
  - (C) in a very real and profound sense Jesus is the presence of God
- d. however, the glory that Jesus radiated was more intrinsic, an essential part of His being, and to be seen in His entire ministry
  - (A) "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14)

- (B) we read of the wedding in Cana when He turned water into wine, “This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him.” (John 2:11)
- e. there are a couple of verses as Christ ended His earthly ministry that are very telling; Jesus is speaking
  - (A) “Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name.” Then a voice came out of heaven: “I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.” (John 12:27-28)
  - (B) Christ on the cross radiated glory, glorifying God’s name

## 2. Image

‘Son, ... the exact representation of His nature’ 1:3

- a. the Son is
  - (A) the express image of God’s being
  - (B) that word ‘representation’ or ‘image’ in Greek is charakter – an engraving or stamping that depicts a person or thing, such as the head of the queen on a coin
  - (C) so the Son bears the very stamp of the nature of God
- b. let us examine the word ‘nature’ or ‘being’ for a moment
  - (A) the thought of the word is not simply that God exists, is a being
  - (B) nor is it that God has a certain nature, certain qualities
  - (C) it is rather the fundamental substance or essence of Deity, all that constitutes God, marking Him to be truly and really God
- c. Jesus bears that same stamp upon His being; hence he could say
  - (A) “He who sees Me sees the One who sent Me.” (John 12:45)
  - (B) and “Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’” (John 14:9)
  - (C) and Paul could write “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.” (Colossians 1:15)
  - (D) and “For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form,” (Colossians 2:9)
  - (E) and “... the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” (2 Corinthians 4:4)
- d. when we accept the gospel, we see in Jesus what God is really like

## D. Superior in Reference to His Universe

### 1. He Cares for His Universe

- a. we have seen the Son as the agent of creation – of all things
- b. and also as the heir of what He has created – of all things
- c. and God cares for that Universe
  - (A) many OT passages speak of His providing for the needs of His creatures, both good and evil men, and all animals
  - (B) Jesus taught, “Are not five sparrows sold for two cents? Yet not one of them is forgotten before God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows.” (Luke 12:6-7)
  - (C) the Son entered humanity that He might redeem fallen mankind and a fallen universe: “For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, ... in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.” (Romans 8:19-21)
- d. to accomplish this, the Son is sustainer, purifier and ruler

### 2. Sustainer

‘Son, ... upholds all things by the word of His power’ 1:3

- a. God’s involvement in the universe did not cease at creation
- b. the book of Genesis, and the Scriptures as a whole, should remove any doubt you or I may have in that direction
- c. we have just mentioned some of the acts of God’s providence
- d. but the Son has a very special relation to His universe
  - (A) perhaps you have seen pictures of the mythical hero, Atlas, who bears the earth upon his shoulders; holding it up
  - (B) the word ‘upholds’ in this verse, however, is not talking about a stationary Atlas, but of an active, ongoing carrying forward
  - (C) not simply of the planet earth, but of the entire universe
- e. from the super-galaxies seen at the limits of our telescopes to the sub-atomic quarks discovered by their actions on one another, each part of the universe is carried along its prescribed path: “He is before all

things, and in Him all things hold together.” (Colossians 1:17)

- f. at the word of power of the Son, at the expression of that dynamic power the universe is being carried forward by the Son, to the end and purpose for which it was created according to God’s decrees
- g. the whole course of history and nature, rightly interpreted, reveals the working of the Son ...’<sup>{3}</sup>. – our Jesus Christ is in charge of it all

### 3. Purifier

‘Son, ... When He had made purification of sins’ 1:3

- a. and with these words we come to a theme which, as it permeates the Scriptures as a whole, a keynote to this book of Hebrews
- b. why are we so interested in the Son?
- c. because it is the Son who at Calvary, on the cross, has dealt with and taken care of the one blemish on His universe; a blemish brought about by the rebel Satan and by rebel mankind; the blemish of sin
  - (A) the force of this part of the verse is this, that the Son has in Himself accomplished once and for all the purification of sins
  - (B) “and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.” (1 Peter 2:24), or, as later in
  - (C) Hebrews 9:12, “... through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.”
- d. what is the purpose that this great Son, supreme and superior to all others, should enter humanity?
  - (A) not just to cover sins so as to void their punishment – that was the temporising solution of the OT until such time as Christ came
  - (B) not forgiveness of the debt of sin, that debt being paid at the price of the death of our Redeemer
  - (C) but the ultimate: that sins should be cleansed from man’s heart
- e. man attempts in many ways at self-purification: from desperate self-efforts to rationalising sin away – all are failures
- f. but the Son, because of who He is, what He has done, does not fail

### 4. Ruler

‘Son, ... He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high’ 1:3

- a. for all the preceding reasons, the Son is qualified to rule; and does so

- (A) Jesus, born in Nazareth, is seated – His work complete
  - (B) Jesus, Son of Man, is put in the place of honour
  - (C) Jesus, Son of God, takes up His office as King, and rules
  - (D) so that it is written “which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 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. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church,” (Ephesians 1:20-22) – until this time and this age shall end
- b. “ then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death.” (1 Corinthians 15:24-26)

## E. Conclusion

### 1. God’s Final Word

- a. last week we saw Jesus as God’s supreme self-revelation
- b. He and His word is sufficient for every seeker, for every believer
- c. but left unanswered the question

### 2. Who Is This Jesus?

- a. man will call Jesus a good man; a profound teacher; a charismatic leader; a religious phenomenon
- b. but these verses give a more exalted answer; a preposterous reply; and yet the true solution
- c. Jesus is the Eternal Son of God, superior to all beings
  - (A) in His carrying out of the Father’s will
  - (B) in His relationship to the Father
  - (C) in His carrying out the plan for this universe
- d. He is the Infinite who subjected Himself to the limitation of finite man
  - (A) leaving heaven, coming to earth
  - (B) for the sake of His creation, ‘for us men, and for our salvation’
  - (C) and He accomplished that work: ‘it is finished!’

- e. how should we respond to this mountain of truth?
- (A) what mercy; what grace; Jesus died in my place
  - (B) can you reject the solution for sin that He offers? Surely not!
  - (C) is it possible to have too high a view of Jesus? No way!
  - (D) can you love Him too much? Oh! that with a full heart we say  
Oh how I love Him, Saviour and friend!  
How can my praises ever find end!  
Through years unnumbered on heaven's shore,  
My Tongue shall praise Him forevermore. —<sup>{4}</sup>.
  - (E) let us close in praise of Him, our glorious Saviour (“Look Ye Saints, the Sight is Glorious”)

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ASV American Standard Version of 1901

AV Authorized (King James) Version of 1769

NAS New American Standard version © 1960, 1995 The Lockman Foundation (usually the 1995 edition)

NIV New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society

NKJV New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers

WEY The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

Some of the commentaries and resources used in the preparation of this message are identified as follow:

Barnes – *Notes on the New Testament, et alia*, by Rev Albert Barnes, Gall & Inglis, Edinburgh

BM – *Biblical Museum*, Editor James Comper Gray, ca 1870

EBC – *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, © 1986 Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 49530, Michigan  
*Hebrews*, by Leon Morris

EGT – *The Expositor’s Greek Testament*, Hodder & Stoughton  
*Hebrews*, by Marcus Dods

Gill – *Exposition of the Old Testament, Exposition of the New Testament*, by John Gill, D.D.

JFB -- Jamieson, Fausset and Brown commentary on the Old and New Testaments

Kerux – The sermon & illustration data base compiled by Rev. David Holwick at the web-site,  
[www.holwick.com](http://www.holwick.com).

NICNT – *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*  
*The Epistle to the Hebrew*, by F. F. Bruce

RWP – *Robertson’s Word Pictures of the New Testament*, by Dr. A. T. Robertson

TYN – *The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*  
*Hebrews*, by Donald Guthrie

2. Durango, Colorado, Herald, quoted by Earl Wilson – Kerux illustration #6769

3. EGT, *in loc.*

4. '*Blessed Redeemer,*' by Avis Marguerite Burgeson Chistiansen (1895-1985) © 1921, renewal 1949 by John T. Benson, Jr., assigned to Singspiration, 1981.