

Heb 1:2-3 The Supremacy of the Son (part 5)

Today, we finish the 7 expressions on the supremacy of the Son in vv. 2-3. As we take the Lord's Supper, we will consider the exaltation of the Son, particularly his position, where He is and what this means. Today, Jesus sits in heaven! This is so important for us as we understand the Gospel! I think of Paul's words in 1 Tim. 3:16: "**Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.**" Brothers and sisters, we have no gospel if Jesus is not "*taken up in glory*," if he is not "*seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high*" (v. 3). I have three general truths, and several applications.

1. He is exalted with a position of Honor. According to v. 3, where is he seated? He is seated "**at the right hand of God.**" The meaning here is that Jesus has the HIGHEST place of honor. As God is honored, So is the Son! He is at the right hand of the "MAJESTY ON HIGH," which is to say, "in heaven" (NIV). His glory is unsurpassed, unparalleled, unrivaled, unmatched, and unequaled!

When I was a kid, we used to play all kinds of games on the playground during recess. And always the group would choose two captains who would then choose their players. Well, the captains were usually the best. And, who do you think they picked first? They picked the best players in the first positions. What an honor to be a captain or to be picked first. I also think of a president of a country, taking the highest position in the government. Or even better, the king, who is exalted above all the other positions in the kingdom.

Concerning Jesus, Paul says this in Eph. 4:10: "**He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.**" He is not speaking of the clouds, or even the expanse of the universe; He is speaking of the place where God dwells above ALL. Some may point out that He sits at the "right hand," implying some kind of position lower than God. But, this cannot be the case. For, He is the "**radiance of the glory of God,**" the "**exact imprint of his nature.**" He "**created the world,**" and He "**upholds the universe by the word of his power.**" Well, no earthly illustration will do justice to the exalted position of the Son of God. It is really inexpressible with words. John Owen says, "*How little our weak understandings apprehend of this majesty!*" Nonetheless, these truths have been revealed to us, and by the Holy Spirit and through the Word, we are on a never-ending journey to behold the beauty of Christ in his exaltation.

The author of Hebrews is referencing Ps. 110:1, which by the way, is the most quoted OT verse in the NT. And really, the entire Book of Hebrews flows from this truth. In this Psalm, David declares, "**The Lord says to my Lord: Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.**" We see this truth throughout the Book. In 1:13: "**And to which of the angels has he ever said, 'Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.'**" Or in 8:1: "**Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven.**" Or in 10:12: "**But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God.**" Finally in 12:2: "**looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.**"

The OT is full of such pictures and truths about the exaltation of the Messiah, the Son, the Lord of Glory! Let's read some of these together.

Pastor: As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days took his seat; his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames; its wheels were burning fire. (Dan. 7:9)

Congregation: A stream of fire issued and came out from before him; a thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened. (Dan. 7:10)

Pastor: And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever! (Rev. 5:13)

Congregation: And the four living creatures said, "Amen!" and the elders fell down and worshiped. (Rev. 5:14)

Pastor: Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully. He will receive blessing from the LORD and righteousness from the God of his salvation. (Ps. 24:3-5)

Congregation: Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD, strong and mighty, the LORD, mighty in battle! (Ps. 24:7-8)

Pastor: Lift up your heads, O gates! And lift them up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory! (Ps. 24:9-10)

Congregation: And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth. (Mic. 5:4)

Now, let me make a couple comments about this position of honor before moving to the next truth. First, this exaltation is in the context of Jesus' humiliation, particularly his work on the cross to take away our sins. This great exaltation is not referring to Jesus in his essence as God (already exalted), but instead to the exaltation given to Him as the One who has died on the cross, laid down his life as a perfect sacrifice. He is not only the High Priest who enters the holy of holies on his own merit, He is also the sacrificial lamb who takes away our sins (John 1:29). This is why in Phil 2:8-11, Paul says, "**And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore, God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and**

every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” We do not have such an exaltation without the humiliation of the cross.

Another brief, but very important truth. The exaltation of Jesus to the greatest of honor includes his bodily resurrection from the dead. Since I am focusing more on his ascension, we aren't spending a lot of time here. But, today, Jesus is risen. And because He is risen, he has overcome death. And after his resurrection, he spent some days with his disciples, and then after his ascension, He sent the Holy Spirit, who continues to work in this world and the church, till he returns.

2. He is exalted with a position of Permanence. This is an implied truth from v. 3 as we see that Jesus “sat down.” Now, to sit down implies that the job is finished, and we will see this more directly in a moment. But, in finishing his work as the high priest, who also laid down his life as a sacrifice on the cross, and then ascending to heaven to the highest position of honor, his work of mediator continues without ceasing. A.W. Pink calls this truth: “*settled continuance.*” In other words, his position is permanent, which includes an ongoing work. YES, his work is finished! But, as He sits at the right hand of the Majesty on high, the benefits of his work flow down continually to his people.

Let me give an example from the OT. Right before Jacob died, he gathered his sons and prophesied over them as to their future. And when he gets to Joseph he says, “**Joseph is a fruitful bough (tree), a fruitful bough by a spring; his branches run over the wall.**” And then he says, “**The archers bitterly attacked him, shot at him and harassed him severely, yet his bow remained unmoved . . .**” (Gen 49:22-24). The words “bow remained unmoved” are literally his “bow SAT in strength.” In other words, no matter what came his way, he was unmoved. He “sat” or “abode” in unmovable strength. In the same way, Jesus “sits” in unmovable strength. His position is permanent. And there He will continue. Rev. 22:21 says, “**Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb.**”

Today, Jesus “sits” in a position of permanence. And this is very important for us! Think about it! Since Jesus' work is permanent, this means there will never be a time when his blessings stop flowing down to us. Because of his work of making purification for sins, and then his being exalted to the right hand of the Majesty on high, we will never lack the blessings of God in this age and the age to come. The “**river of the water of life**” will never stop flowing! This is why Jesus says to the woman at the well, “**whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life**” (John 4:14).

If His position is not permanent . . . and ongoing, then our position with Him is also in jeopardy. Our sins can be forgiven one moment, and not forgiven the next. Today, as we take the Lord's Supper, we remember this truth. Let's move on to #3.

3. He is exalted to a position of Rest. Another truth that is pictured in the “sitting down” of Jesus after finishing his work of taking away our sins, is the picture of rest. Think about it. When you work hard all day and you come home, what do you want to do? Sit down and rest. When I work for 2 or 3 hours in the yard, I want to come in and sit down. To sit down is to rest. I think our

culture gets this, even in bad examples. Think about the Marvel Movie *Infinity War*. When Thanos got all the infinity stones and conquered the worlds, what did he do? He sat down! Here, we see the REAL picture of what it means to sit down and rest. The exaltation of Christ and his “sitting down” at the right hand of the Majesty on high is the pinnacle of rest.

Think about the high priest of Old Covenant. In the tabernacle of meeting, there was no place to sit down. The high priest would enter the holy of holies standing; and after offering the sacrifices of blood, he would walk out. In that system, there was no sitting down. There was NO REST. Year after year the high priest entered and came out. This work of sacrificing never ended. But, when Jesus offered himself on the cross as the perfect and acceptable sacrifice, rose again and then ascended to the Father, He entered the Holy of Holies. He entered Heaven! He sits on the throne of heaven. His work is done. In this way, He rests.

What beautiful truths! The Son is supreme! He is exalted to a position of HONOR, to a position of PERMANENCE, and to a position of REST. So, what does this mean for us? Let me begin our time of application with the words of Paul from Eph. 2:6. He says that “**we are seated with him in the heavenly places . . .**” I cannot imagine a more glorious truth! Because of the person and work of the Son of God, by the Spirit, through the means of faith, we are united with Him. And as He sits in honor, so the Father honors us. As He has entered THE holy of holies in heaven and sits permanently as our high priest, so is our place permanent. And, as he rests from his work, so we rest. So what does this look like. I have a number of applications.

Application: Our rest in this life comes as we look to Christ by faith alone. Turn to Heb. 4:1-3: “**Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it. For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened. For we who have believed enter that rest, as he has said, “As I swore in my wrath, ‘They shall not enter my rest . . .’**” The work of Christ on the cross and his exaltation to the right of hand of God where He now sits is the basis for our rest as we believe in Him (faith); no works required.

Application: Our continued peace is dependent on the exaltation of the Son. After he made purification for sins, He “sat down” at the right hand of the majesty on high. Our sins are not put away if He is not exalted. He was “crucified for our sins, raised for our justification” (Rev. 4:25). If Jesus is not raised from the dead, and then exalted, we have no peace.

Application: This also means we have not preached the gospel if we do not include his exaltation. The cross is not the end. He is risen. And, He is exalted to the highest of positions.

Application: There is no church if he is not exalted. And, If He is not Lord of heaven, our worship is in vain. We are following a lie. We may as well “eat, drink, and be merry:” But, since he is exalted he can say with the utmost authority, “**I will build my church**” (Matt. 16:18). He can also say, “**All authority in heaven and earth is mine; therefore, go and make disciples . . .**” (Matt. 28:18-20).

Application: The works of Satan against God and his Kingdom are useless. They are vain and senseless. They cannot touch the Lord of Glory. They cannot disrupt his kingdom. They cannot lessen or overthrow his rule. This means they cannot hinder the building of the church or take away the security of God's people because we also are "seated with him in the heavenlies"

Application: The blessings of God do not come to us unless Jesus is exalted. Eph. 4:7-13: **"But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore, it says, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ . . ."** Because He is exalted, his work is permanent. And because it is permanent, his blessings continue to flow to us.

Application: There is a tension now as we await his 2nd coming. "The church is born in this precarious tension between the ascension and second coming, sustained by the Spirit" (Horton, 531). For now, he is absent on earth, but the Spirit will continue to work until his coming, as we've just seen in Eph. 4.

Application: The greatest of humiliation results in the greatest of glory. (I think of the donkey in Chronicles of Narnia's *Last Battle*.) The first shall be last and the last first. And Christ underwent the greatest humiliation. Therefore, He is exalted to the highest of positions.) This is the principle of God giving grace to the humble.

As we take the Lord's Supper, and remember our Lord's words: "This is my body, broken for you, do this in remembrance of me," we can do this because Jesus is Lord; He is supreme. He is exalted to the position of greatest honor. It is a position of permanence. And, it is a position of rest.