

Hebrews 1:2b-3**Craig Crawshaw**

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. 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*

Last week, as we began our study through the book of Hebrews, we noted that the three key themes of the book are PREEMINENCE, PRIESTHOOD and PERSEVERANCE.

Today we launch directly into the PREEMINENCE of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

I don't know about you, but when I get discouraged, I find that the best antidote is more of Jesus. When I'm confused and need direction, I find great clarity of mind in focusing on Jesus' greatness. When my calm gets stormy, I find that time spent with Jesus restores my calm.

After all, wise King Solomon taught us that ...

Proverbs 18:10 *The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runs into it and is safe.*

And we know the name of that Lord – His name is Jesus.

I'm not talking about anything spiritually weird here – like locking myself in some dark closet and only thinking about Jesus, or continually chanting His name. I'm just talking about meditating upon Jesus' person and character as revealed in the Bible. This usually involves spending some time alone with Him in prayer, thought and meditation on His Word until I find my courage, direction and calm restored. And it works – it really works!

In today's brief but powerful passage, the author of Hebrews gives us a 7-fold description of Jesus, the Son of God. Each of the seven drives home the preeminence, as well as the deity of Jesus. And as we focus on these seven aspects of Jesus' person, I know we will find personal and corporate courage, strength and calm for today and for the days ahead. May the power of the Holy Spirit that came upon the believers at Pentecost so many years ago, empower us today as we join the author of Hebrews in lifting up Jesus, the Son of God.

So here they are – the 7-Fold description of the Son in Hebrews, verses 2 and 3:

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|----|---------------------------|---|
| 1. | HEIR OF ALL | “heir of all things” |
| 2. | CREATOR OF ALL | “through whom He made the world” |
| 3. | RADIANCE OF GOD | “the radiance of His glory” |
| 4. | EXACT IMAGE OF GOD | “the exact representation of His nature” |
| 5. | SUSTAINER OF ALL | “upholds all things” |
| 6. | PURIFYING PRIEST | “made purification of sins” |
| 7. | KING OVER ALL | “sat down at the right hand of the Majesty” |

Note that the subject of this statement is “God” – God the Father. It is the Father who has spoken in these last days through His Son. It is the Father who appointed the Son as heir. It is the Father who made the world through His Son. It is the Father's glory and the Father's image that the Son represents. It is at the Father's throne that the Son sits at the right hand.

Jesus the Son and God the Father are so intertwined in this personality and ministry as to see them as equally divine and one, and yet separate. This is the mystery of the Triinity: 3 in 1.

THE UNITY OF THE FATHER AND THE SON

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God.

John 10:30 [Jesus:] I and the Father are one

John 14:9 [Jesus:] He who has seen me has seen the Father.

As we look through these 7 descriptions of Jesus the Son, I will reference other Scriptures that teach the similar truth. But note that it is only here in Hebrews 1 that we find all 7 listed together so succinctly and powerfully.

1. HEIR OF ALL

Hebrews 1:2 “whom He appointed heir of all things”

Colossians 1:16 “all things were created ... for Him”

Ephesians 1:10 “summing up of all things in Christ”

Romans 8:16-17 “we are children of God, and if children, heirs also ... and fellow heirs with Christ

In our text we see that God the Father has appointed Jesus the Son to be heir of all things.

So Sonship = Heirship. This makes logical sense, as the only son is typically the heir of a family estate. But we're not talking about the death of the Father at which time Jesus inherits all the things of creation. Rather, the emphasis is on Jesus being the recipient of all pleasure and glory that the creation brings.

Colossians 1:16 says it this way: “all things were created by Him and for Him” – implying for His pleasure and purposes

Ephesians 1:10 says that the Father's intention was the “summing up of all things in Christ.” This seems to imply that all things find their ultimate purpose in Jesus and that without Jesus nothing finds its “summing up” or purpose.

That Jesus is the Heir of all means that our lives exist for the pleasure and purpose of Jesus, and all we do or accomplish is for His honor and glory as the appointed heir of all things. This really should cause me to take the focus off myself and put it where it deserves – on Him and for Him.

That we are called sons and children of God, albeit adopted, is an amazing calling. (1 John 3:1; Romans 8:16). As such, we are the recipients of His most intimate Fatherly love, protection and provision. That we are further called co-heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17) takes this amazing calling to an even higher level of amazement. As such, we not only have the privilege of suffering with Him in this life (yes, privilege!) but sharing His glory in the next life in heaven (Romans 8:17).

Though all things are “for Him”, we now learn that we, his co-heirs, will share in all “these things.” Specifically, every ministry we have given for Christ and every person we have touched for Christ in this life will be our glory or “crown” in the next life. We too will share in all things that are done for Jesus – amazing!

2. CREATOR OF ALL

Hebrews 1:2 “through whom also He made the world

John 1:3 “all things came into being through Him [the Word, Jesus]”

Colossians 1:16 “by Him [Jesus] all things were created”

In our text we read that it is the Son “through whom He [God the Father] made the world.”

This is reiterated in John 1:3: “all things came into being through Him” [Jesus, the Word] and Colossians 1:16: “by Him [Jesus] all things were created”

The “maker” of the world is not only the craftsman, but also the architect and designer. Thus we can attribute all personalities to Jesus; all plant and animals to Jesus, all governmental designs to Jesus, all male and female differences to Jesus, the intricacies of the macro and micro universe to Jesus, and on and on.

Jesus as creator and designer of all helps me to understand that supposed abnormalities really are “special.” I better appreciate the creative differences between a man and woman’s way of seeing some things. I realize that the distinct personalities of my family and friends are not weird but by design. I can know that different talents and skills are given by God and that each are unique in some way

Jesus as creator makes His earthly miracles all make perfect logical sense. Jesus as creator makes His bidding me to call for His intervention into His creation make perfect sense. He and only He can alter the fabric of His creation for His purposes.

Every discovery of the wonders of creation should cause me to praise Him yet again and be amazed yet again by His creativity and power.

3. RADIANCE OF GOD

Hebrews 1:3 “and He is the radiance of His glory”

John 1:4 “In Him [The Word, Jesus] was life, and the life was the Light of men.”

1 John 1:5 “God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all”

John 8:12 [Jesus:] “I am the Light of the world”

God the Father is the power source of “shekinah glory.” This is the visible cloud by day and fire by night that the Israelites saw when God dwelt in the tabernacle. So the glory of God is related to God’s dwelling with man. To give God glory is to give Him praise and recognition for His being “with us.”

That Jesus is the radiance of the Father’s glory is to say that He is like the rays of the sun to the sun itself. He is that which displays the glory or communicates that glory to man. Just as the sun is inseparable from its rays of light, so the Father of glory is inseparable from the Son of glory.

In John’s first epistle – First John – he calls God by two very special names, meant to designate the essence of God’s character. The first of these names is LIGHT – “God is light” (1 John 1:5).

If God the Father is LIGHT – implying purity, perfection and glorious radiance extending and reaching out to man, then Jesus is the rays of light that shows that glory and divine reach. Jesus is the visible expression of God’s perfection and desire to reach out to man. And, as John goes on to say in 1 John 1, “when we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus the Son cleanses us from all sin.” Thus we are made perfect in His sight and God is able to dwell with us in radiance.

4. EXACT IMAGE OF GOD

Hebrews 1:3 “the exact representation of His nature”

Colossians 1:15 “He is the image of the invisible God”

Genesis 1:27 “God created man in His own image”

1 John 4:8 “God is love”

“Exact representation” implies a perfect duplicate. It is not just a “facsimile” or “image” in the sense of something separate. It is “image” in the sense of a “stamp” of the original from the same mold.

Therefore, this statement tells us that Jesus is indeed equal with God – he IS the image of God.

When Genesis tells us that we are made “in the image” of God, the implication is different. This is saying that we are a thinking and caring spirit being just as God is – unlike any other creation of God including angels, animals or plants.

And what is God’s nature at it’s essence? Well, just as John described God as LIGHT, so also he described his as LOVE – “God is love.” (1 John 4:8). And I see the author of Hebrews saying that Jesus exactly represents God’s love. He was “love incarnate” as He walked the earth.

So I see “radiance of God’s glory” to be related to LIGHT, and “exact representation of Hi nature” to be related to LOVE. Jesus is both. When you’ve seen Jesus, you’ve seen the Father.

5. SUSTAINER OF ALL

Hebrews 1:3 “upholds all things by His power”

Colossians 1:17 “in Him all things hold together”

Acts 17: 28 “in Him we live and move and exist”

Here we find that Jesus is not only creator of all, but sustainer of all. He keeps the planets spinning, but not falling out of orbit. He keeps the seasons coming year after year. He keeps the timeclock of the universe running in perfect sync. He keeps the earth’s temperature not too hot or too cold to sustain life.

But the world “upholds” means more that “holding up.” The correct translation means to “move forward” or “move along.” This speaks not just of maintaining creation, but of providing divine momentum to creation. We call this PROVIDENCE or DESTINY – creation moving along with purpose.

This lets me know that I am not just an infinitesimal particle in the predetermined machinery of the universe, kept going by the power of the sustainer. Rather, I am part of a purpose and plan of God, moving toward a resolution and climax in the divine architecture of God. And taking this principle personally, Jesus is MY sustainer – moving me forward in my growth and conforming me to His likeness. He not only sustains me with bread, like he feeds the sparrows. He also feeds me with the living bread of His person. “Man shall not live by bread alone.”

“All things” upheld includes me!

6, PURIFYING PRIEST

Hebrews 1:3 “He had made purification of sins”

Numbers 19:9 “Now a man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer and deposit them outside the camp in a clean place, and the congregation of the sons of Israel shall keep it as water to remove impurity; it is purification from sin.

Hebrews 9:22 “without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins”

Colossians 1:20 “[Jesus] made peace through the blood”

1 John 1:7 “the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin”

Numbers 19 tells of how a red heifer, perfectly unblemished, would be slaughtered outside the camp. Its blood would be sprinkled toward the front of the tabernacle seven times. Then the heifer would be burned and its ashes would be deposited outside the camp and be the purifying of the sins of the people. This symbolic purification was all fulfilled in Jesus Christ, who as the sinless

Lamb of God was slain on Calvary, outside the city limits of Jerusalem, and whose blood was shed to cleanse us from our sin, and whose dead body was raised to a glorified body, living to purify us his followers forever.

Jesus as perfect, sinless priest offered blood for the purification of sins one and for all and forever. This speaks of His divine priesthood, and in chapters 7-10 of Hebrews we will learn far more of this aspect of His divinity and intercession for mankind. Praise God for the cleansing blood of Jesus!

7. KING OVER ALL

Hebrews 1:3 "He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high"

Psalms 110:1 "The Lord [God the Father] says to my Lord [Jesus the Son]: "sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet."

1 Peter 3:21-22 "Jesus Christ, who is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers being made subject to Him"

Romans 8:34 "[Jesus Christ] is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us."

1 Timothy 2:5 "There is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus"

The last of our list of seven has Jesus sitting down at the right hand of the Majesty of the Father in heaven. The "right hand" was an expression of closeness and equality in the Jewish mindset. When one reclined at supper, to be on the "right hand" of another was to be as close as you could be. So it was that the disciples fought over who would be at the right hand of Jesus in glory. And John, referring to Himself as the one beloved by Jesus, is thought to have been the one to sit at Jesus' right so often.

The right hand was thought to be the "power hand" and so Jesus at the right hand of the power hand of God is to be the mediator between God and man. So Paul speaks of Jesus being at the right hand of God interceding for us, as the one mediator between God and man. This is the heart of the message.

That Jesus is at the right hand of Majesty makes him equally sovereign == King. That Jesus is at the right hand of God gives him the unique role of being the mediator between God the Father and mankind. Jesus is our one and only access to God the Father, and he intercedes for us constantly before the throne as our Advocate. Praise Him!

Let's conclude this look into the 7-fold preeminence of Jesus the Son, by noting the 7-fold praise of the Lamb of God in heaven. We are told this praise is sung by angels, elders and saints by the multitude. Let's join them.

Revelation 5:12 "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing."