

Christ is Superior to the Prophets
Hebrews 1:3
Part Seven

Living in this world is not easy. What did Job say in **Job 5:7? “For man is born for trouble, as sparks fly upward.”** Do you believe this? You should for this is the truth.

Whether we are a believer or a non-believer, if we live long enough trouble will find us and when that trouble finds us these proverbial sparks will fly upward.

But even though believers and non-believers will all experience these troubles and therefore these proverbial sparks, there should be a huge difference in the way believers respond to their troubles and proverbial sparks. So, what should the difference be?

The believer unlike the unbeliever should be able, in spite of all their troubles, to rejoice. And why should they be able to rejoice?

This question brings us back to our study of Hebrews, which was written by an unknown author to a group of Hebrew Christians living in Rome around 67-69 AD in order to strengthen their faith in the midst of a great persecution so that they in the midst of that persecution would not be tempted to turn from Christ back to Judaism.

So how did the author of this letter seek to strengthen the faith of these struggling Hebrew Christians by his letter? He sought to strengthen their faith by showing them throughout his letter that Christ was superior to anything that they might have left behind in Judaism, which led us to the question that we are now seeking to answer as we continue our study of this book. And what is that question?

How did the author of the book of Hebrews see Christ as superior?

First of all, the author of the book of Hebrews saw Christ as superior to the Old Testament prophets (Hebrews 1:1-4). So in what way did the author of Hebrews see Christ as superior to these prophets?

The author of the book of Hebrews saw Christ as superior to the Old Testament prophets because he believed that Christ, being God's Son, was the culmination of divine revelation (Hebrews 1:1-2a).

In other words, the author of the book of Hebrews saw the Old Testament prophets simply as an opening act of divine revelation sent to prepare the way for the true headliner who was Christ, the only begotten Son of God. We saw this in **Hebrews 1:1** through the first part of **verse 2**.

But the author of Hebrews was not satisfied with simply having made this point. He wanted to drive this point home to his readers even further. So how did the author seek to accomplish this?

The author of Hebrews continued to drive home the magnitude of Christ's superiority to the Old Testament prophets by providing a seven-fold description of Christ (Hebrews 1:2b-4). And where did the author record this seven-fold description? He recorded it for us in **Hebrews 1:2-4**. So now let me quickly review for you that parts of this description that we have already covered.

So, what was the first part of this seven-fold description? The author of Hebrews described Christ as God's appointed heir of all things (Hebrews 1:2b). We saw this description in the middle of **verse 2**. So, what was the second part of this seven-fold description?

The author of Hebrews described God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the one through whom God made the world (Hebrews 1:2c). We saw this description at the end of **verse 2**. So, what was the third part of this seven-fold description?

The author of Hebrews described God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the radiance of His Father's glory and the exact representation of His nature (Hebrews 1:3). We saw this description at the beginning of **verse 3**. And what was its purpose? It was to describe Christ's relationship to His Father. So, what was the fourth part of this seven-fold description?

The author of Hebrews described God's Son as the One who upholds all things by the word of His power (Hebrews 1:3b). We saw this description near the middle of **verse 3**. And what was its purpose. It was to describe

Christ's relationship to the universe. So, what was the fifth part of this seven-fold description?

The author of Hebrews described Christ as having made purification of sins (Hebrews 1:3). We saw this in the near the end of **verse 3**.

So after having described Christ as having made purification of sins or in other words after having described Christ as having made atonement of sins, where did the author go next in describing Christ?

The author of Hebrews described Christ as having sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high (Hebrews 1:3). Isn't this exactly how the described Christ at the end of **Hebrews 1:3**? Yes, this is exactly how He described Christ.

And what is my hope for this message as we examine this particular descriptive phrase? My hope is that as we examine this descriptive phrase we will not only be better able to understand what is meant by this phrase but that we also through our better understanding might find ourselves being able to rejoice when we find ourselves in the midst troubles and those proverbial sparks.

So, what does this mean? When the author described Christ as having sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, he was describing the exaltation of Christ to God's right hand. This is what the author was describing.

So let me ask you this question. Would Christ's exaltation to the right hand of the Majesty on high or in other words to God's right hand have been surprising? No! This would not have been surprising. Christ's exaltation to the right hand of the Majesty on high or in other words to the right hand of God had been prophesied by David in Psalm 110:1.

So now let me read for you this particular Psalm and see if this is not so. **"The Lord says to my Lord, 'Sit down at My right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for Your feet.'"** So was the exaltation of Christ to the right hand of God or in other words to the **"right hand of the Majesty on high"** prophesied by David in **Psalms 110:1**? I believe that the answer would have to be yes!

And I believe this was confirmed by Jesus Himself in **Matthew 22:41-45**. So let me now begin to read these verses for you and see if this is not so. **“Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question: (42) ‘What do you think about the Christ, whose son is He?’ They said to Him, ‘The son of David.’”** So was that a correct answer? Yes! But was it a complete answer? No! It was not a complete answer! And why was it not a complete answer? It was not a complete answer because Christ was not just the son of David but He was also the Son of God. And did the Pharisees believe this? No! They did not believe this.

Therefore Jesus, building on what had already transpired between Him and the Pharisees in **Matthew 22:41-42**, then tried to set these Pharisees straight in **Matthew 22:43-45**. And how did Jesus try to set them straight? He tried to set them straight by introducing to them, in **Matthew 22:43-45**, the prophetic words of David, concerning the future exaltation of Christ, from **Psalms 110:1**.

So now let me read for you **Matthew 22:43-45** and see if this is not so. **“He said to them, ‘Then how does David in the Spirit call Him “Lord” (44) [And now here it comes, Jesus will now reference the prophetic words of David from Psalms 110. And what were these prophetic words of David? These were the prophetic words of David] saying, “the Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies beneath your feet.’” (45) [These are the prophetic words of David, and now having stated these prophetic words; Jesus then went on in verse 45 to ask these Pharisees a question. And what was His question to them? It was this:] (45) ‘If David then calls Him [or in other words the Christ] “Lord,” how is He [the Christ] his son [or in other words David’s son]?’”** So this was Christ’s question.

So, what was the point that Christ was trying to establish for these Pharisees by this question? This was Christ’s point that He was trying to establish: Christ was more than just the son of David. He was also the Son of God; otherwise David would not have called Christ, **“Lord”** or in other words **“ADONAI”** in **Psalms 110:1**.

So did the Pharisees get the point? No! If they had gotten the point they would have been able to answer His question but they of course were not able to answer His question, which is made clear to us in **Matthew 22:46**.

So do the words of Christ in **Matthew 22:41-45** confirm for us that **Psalm 110:1** is in fact a prophetic Messianic Psalm? Yes! Therefore if this is so, should the author's description of Christ being exalted to the right hand of the Majesty on high in **Hebrews 1:3** surprise us? Absolutely not! David in **Psalm 110:1** had prophesied Christ's exaltation to the right hand of God a thousand years before Christ was even born, which was, as I have already stated, confirmed by Jesus Himself in **Matthew 22:41-45**.

So now having established the fact that the exaltation of Christ to the right hand of the Majesty on high or in other words to the right hand of God had been prophesied, let me ask you this question. What is the significance of Christ being exalted to God's right hand?

God's "hand" or "arm" is frequently used in the Scriptures as a symbol of God's power (Deuteronomy 26:8). Let me read for you **Deuteronomy 26:8** and see if this is not so. **"And the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with great terror and with signs and wonders."** So is the "hand" or "arm" of God used in Scripture as a symbol of God's power? Yes! Absolutely!

So now let me ask you this question. If the "hand" or "arm" of God is designated as God's right hand or God's right arm, as it was in **Psalm 110:1** and in **Hebrew 1:3**, does this diminish or does it enhance the picture of God's power? It enhances it. And how do we know this? We know this, not only because it makes sense, but also because we see it used in this way in the Scriptures.

In **Isaiah 62** the prophet Isaiah, in reflecting on various promises that God had made to the nation of Israel, said to Israel in respect to those promises in **Isaiah 62:8**, **"The Lord has sworn by His right hand and by His strong arm."** So, what do we see in this verse? Isaiah, under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, used the designation "right hand" and "strong arm" not to diminish but to enhance the picture of God's power.

Therefore what can we conclude about Christ being exalted to **"right hand of the Majesty on high"** or in other words to the **"right hand of God?"**

Christ being exalted to God's right hand is a picture of Christ being exalted to a position of ultimate power and authority (Ephesians 1:20-21; 1 Peter

1:22). And I believe this is reinforced to us in **Ephesians 1:20-21** as well as **1 Peter 1:22** where this exaltation to God's right hand is described as being "**far above all rule and authority and power and dominion.**" This certainly is a lot of power.

So now let me ask you this question. Was this the first time that Christ had ever been in this position of ultimate power and authority at God's right hand? And what is the answer? No! This was not the first time. He had been there before, but because our need He gave up that position.

How do we know this? The Bible tells us this. Let me read for you **Philippians 2:5-8**. "**Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, (6) who, although He is existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, (7) but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. (8) Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.**" So was Christ prior to His incarnation in a position of ultimate power and authority? Yes!

And why did He willingly give it up? Based on **Colossians 2:13** He gave up His position of ultimate power and authority, at the right hand of God, so that He, in coming to earth, might pay the debt of our sin or in other words that He as God's sacrificial lamb and as our great high priest might make purification of sins.

So based on these verses what can we conclude? Though Christ had been in this position of ultimate power and authority at God's right hand, He willingly gave up that position when He came to earth so that He through His death might pay the debt of our sin (Philippians 2:5-8, Colossians 2:13).

So let me ask you this question: Did He, as God's sacrificial lamb and our Great High Priest, pay the debt of our sin and pay that debt in full? Absolutely! If He had not paid that debt of sin in full, Christ would not have been able to return back to His former glory or in other words He would not have been able to be exalted back to His position of ultimate power and authority at the right of the Majesty on high or in other words to the right hand of God that He enjoyed prior to His incarnation. But He was exalted

back to His former position of glory just as **Psalm 110:1** had prophesied and just as **Hebrews 1:3** and other New Testament passages have declared.

So now let me ask you this question. When Christ was exalted back to His former position of glory at God's right hand, what does **Hebrews 1:3** tell us that Christ did? It tells us that Christ "**sat down.**" So, what is the significance of this?

Christ having "sat down" after His exaltation was significant because it communicated that His work of purification had been successfully completed.

So if Christ's work of purification has been successfully completed, is Christ still working? Absolutely!

Though Christ has successfully completed His work of purification, His work of intercession has not yet been completed (Romans 8:34).

Let me read for you **Romans 8:34** and see if this is not so. "**Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.**" So after Christ made purification of sins, did He stop working? No! He continued to work on behalf of those who had placed their faith and trust in Him by continuing to make intercession for them. And this is exactly what He is now presently doing!

So is this good news for us? Absolutely! And why is this good news? If Christ is in fact our Lord and Savior and if we do in fact have a personal relationship with Him by grace through faith and we know that He is presently making intercession for us from His exalted position at the right hand of God, then what can we be convinced of?

We can be convinced, based on **Romans 8:38-39**, "**that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, (39) nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**" So is this good news? Absolutely!

And therefore let us in spite of our troubles and in spite of all the sparks that may be flying upward remember this and by faith claim this so that in spite of those troubles and those sparks we might be able to rejoice, knowing that because Christ is presently interceding for us from the right hand of the throne of God from this place of ultimate power and authority we will never be separated from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. So, what is our prayer?

May God give us the grace to rejoice even in the midst of our troubles knowing that as Christ intercedes for us from His exalted position at the right hand of God we will never be separated from God's love.