

The Saviour's Glory

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Date: 08 March 2017

Preacher: Kenneth Ferguson

[0 : 00] And as the Lord enables us, let us turn again to consider the words we have in the chapter read. The letter to the Hebrews in chapter 1, and we may read the first three verses again.

Long ago at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets. But in these last days, he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.

He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.

After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. And these are glorious words, and they hold many glorious teachings.

But if we are able to touch on one or two of the glories that are here, we will profit by them.

[1 : 21] There are many things that upset the Christian on his or her journey through life. It could be disappointments that are personal to ourselves, disappointments or difficulties in families, in communities, the things that knock us sideways.

And the devil might use these things and say, well, what's the point of seeking to live your life as a Christian? Why don't you just go back to the way you used to be?

There are also teachings that come our way, that try and argue against the teachings of the Scripture. Teachings that are man-based, teachings that bring before us a worldview that is focused on man's aspirations, and man's hopes, and man's priorities for himself.

And in our present day, there are many teachings and viewpoints and philosophies that fit into that category. The things that are kind of set to argue against the Scripture, argue against Christ as Savior, argue against the need to set our house in order before we die.

People say, well, we die and we go out of existence. Well, that's not according to the Scripture. It says in the Scripture so clearly that after death, the judgment, and we will stand before the judge of all the earth, there to receive according to what we have done in the body, whether it be good or bad.

[3 : 14] The letter to the Hebrews is written to encourage Christians at a time of trial.

Maybe the main trial that came their way, it was in the form of those who sought to try and bring them back into the bosom of the Jewish faith, the faith that was full of ceremony at the temple, faith that was full of visual aspects.

For example, the priesthood was there, and the offering of the animals was there, and there was the whole ceremony with which they had been so familiar before they had come to hear the gospel and embrace the gospel.

And there was pressure on them to turn back. And some of them, it looks as if they were almost turning back. It says at the end of chapter 10, for example, the apostle Paul says, We are not of those who turn back unto destruction, but we are of those who continue unto the salvation of our souls.

He's been encouraging them all the way to focus upon the Lord Jesus Christ as the one alone who is able to save from sin.

[4 : 43] And we see here in this chapter 1, at the beginning of the chapter in particular, the apostle highlights the Lord Jesus Christ as the one who brought God's revelation personally before the world.

He acknowledges that long ago and at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets. And if you go through the whole of the Old Testament, you'll find repeated reference to the way the Lord spoke to the older generations under Old Testament times.

But he says in these last days, he has spoken to us by his son. He focuses on Christ Jesus, and he highlights him as the one to whom these people who were so indoctrinated in the Jewish religion. Now, this is the reality. Christ has come, the reality of whom the shadows and the symbols of the Old Testament ritual spoke.

You see what it says? It acknowledges, actually, in the epistle to the Corinthians, 2 Corinthians chapter 3, for example, and at verse 11.

[6 : 05] It talks about the glory of the old dispensation. For example, that is, in the Old Testament ritual and so on. If there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, that is, the Old Testament ritual, if there was glory in that, it was a ministry of condemnation.

It couldn't free anybody, really, from their sins. But the ministry of righteousness must, far exceeded in glory. And this is what he's really talking about in the epistle to the Hebrews, talking about the way righteousness has actually been brought into the experience of sinners.

It is not through following a ritual like the Old Testament was focusing on, but believing in Christ, who is the one that the Old Testament symbols and rituals foretold.

And coming to Christ himself at the beginning of chapter 1, there are three things I'd like to highlight for you. First of all, he talks about the glory of Christ as our Savior.

The glory of Christ as our Savior. Secondly, the glory of the work that he has finished. And thirdly, the glory of Christ at the right hand of the majesty on high.

[7 : 42] Having made purification for sin, he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high. And these Christians, knocked around by difficult circumstances and contrary arguments.

The apostle here says, no look, you have to look beyond the discouragements that are present. You have to look beyond the things that knock you this way and that way on your Christian journey. And you have to focus on the Savior himself. And that must be your continued focus as you journey through life. So one or two words on the glory of the Savior.

First of all, it says in the middle of verse 2, he's talking about him as the Son of God, whom he appointed heir of all things.

The glory of his office as our mediator. And we read and we sang from Psalm 2, verses 6 and 7, that the Lord had appointed him heir of all things.

[8 : 56] And he says, ask of me, and for heritage, the heathen, I'll make thine. He is the one through whom the heathen, as well as the Jewish nation, is going to experience eternal blessedness.

not through following a ritual, but through believing in a person, in the one who is the mediator of God's elect, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And also it says of him, besides being the heir of all things, that he is the one through whom also he created the world. People tend to lose sight of this real aspect of truth.

That Christ is the one through whom the whole world or the whole universe was created. It says elsewhere, without him or apart from him, nothing was made that was made.

And why should these people fall back to embracing a mere ritual of observances as they had under the Old Testament, and turning away from such a Savior who is the creator of the whole world?

[10 : 17] Then he goes on and he says, the beginning of verse 3, he is the radiance of the glory of God.

The radiance of the glory of God. You remember the catechism. What is God? God is a spirit. infinite, eternal, and unchangeable.

In his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth. And Christ in our nature is God in human nature.

And when he walked about the world, and when he performed miracles, and when he taught the people, and preached sermons to them, he was God in human nature, and these aspects of divinity were real in him, and were shown through all that he did, and all that he said.

we must remember, though, that the human nature, it cannot have imparted to it infinite attributes.

[11 : 41] The human nature of Christ cannot have imparted to it infinite attributes. attributes. But, nevertheless, he is the eternal God in human nature, and he is the one through whom the whole world was made, and it says also that he is the one who upholds all things by the word of his power.

Well, these are mysteries that we cannot fathom. But because the scripture says that they are true, we embrace them. And we look to this glorious Savior, who is the radiance of the glory of God.

Now, what does it mean, this word, the radiance of the glory of God? Well, some of the older expositors, they try to explain it this way, talking about the radiance of the sun, when you look at the sun on a bright day.

And the radiance of the sun, 93 million miles away, where it is in space. The light there is the same as the light you receive on your face here in point.

It's the same light. And that's the kind of thing he's talking about here. That the Son of God, Christ, our Savior, he is the radiance of the glory of God, the same in substance, equal in power and in glory.

[13:22] Isn't it amazing that the Apostle here brings all these things before us, even at the very opening of this epistle, to show these people how ill-advised it is for them to turn away from such a marvelous Savior as Jesus Christ is.

The radiance of the glory of God. And then it says in 3, the middle of verse 3, that he is the exact imprint of his nature. And the way they describe this is if you have a piece of soft wax and you have something that may be quite intricate, like a ring or a seal, and if you place the seal on the soft wax, it leaves an exact imprint of itself in the wax.

And that is what we have here, in a much higher way, and in a more mysterious way. Nevertheless, he is talking about Christ, the second person of the Trinity, and it says here that he is the exact imprint of the nature of God.

He is not less than God. He is fully God, and he is fully man at the same time. The same in substance, equal in power, and in glory.

The glory of the Savior. This is the one upon whom your eyes want to feast. And isn't this the one you want to get to know?

[15:12] And isn't this the one you want to love, and obey, and serve? Isn't this the one like the church in the Song of Solomon, that you want to walk along the wilderness leaning upon?

Who is this that comes up from the wilderness? The question is asked in the Song of Solomon, chapter 8, verse 6. Who is this? Surely it is. The Christian leaning upon Christ.

And that's what this is all about. Lean upon him alone. He deserves all your faith, all your devotion, all the effort of your life to serve him and to magnify his name in all that you say and all that you do, in public and in private.

He is the one who is worthy of all of these things. He upholds the universe by the word of his power. When you think of it, he upholds everything, even your physical frame.

If he were to withdraw his word of power from you and from the universe as it exists, it will revert to nothingness as it was before he spoke his word at the beginning of creation.

[16:29] it is because he upholds us and all that exists. That is why we exist. And that is why the church exists.

And that is why the apostle here is so burdened to bring Christ before these people as the one who is worthy of their adoration and their praise.

That is one or two things about the glory of the Savior. But secondly, he talks about the glory of the work that he has finished.

After, this is the middle of verse 3, after making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high.

After making purification for sins, what does it mean? What is sin like?

[17:35] Well, sin is filthy. That is the first thing that comes to your mind when you look at this particular statement. That sin is filthy in itself.

And sin contaminates. And sin renders people impure and unfit for fellowship with God as we are in ourselves.

There are a number of very interesting accounts in the Old Testament ritual as to how people could be pronounced clean under the ceremonial law.

I am going to read one section from the book of Numbers. In chapter 19. And from the beginning actually, down to verse 17.

It is talking about when somebody is to be pronounced clean from the uncleanness that may have attached to him through touching something unclean.

[18:42] The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron saying, this is the statute of the law that the Lord has commanded. Tell the people of Israel to bring you a red heifer without defect, in which there is no blemish, and on which a yoke has never come.

And you shall give it to Eliezer the priest, and it shall be taken outside the camp and slaughtered before him. And Eliezer the priest shall take some of the blood with his finger, and sprinkle some of its blood towards the front of the tent of the meeting seven times, and the heifer shall be burnt in his sight, its skin, its flesh, its blood, with its dung, shall be burnt.

And the priest then shall take cedarwood, and hyssop, and scarlet yarn, and throw them into the fire, burning the heifer. Then the priest shall wash his clothes, and bathe his body in water, and afterward he may come into the camp, but the priest shall be unclean until evening.

And the man who is clean, it says, who is to be clean, cleansed from his sin, he will be sprinkled with this mixture of the water, and the ashes of the heifer, so that this whole ceremony will indicate his cleansing in the presence of God, and under the law.

I read that, and you can read it yourselves later on, to show that there was a real ceremony undertaken if somebody had been pronounced unclean under the law, if somebody had touched a dead corpse, he was unclean, if somebody had touched a grave, if somebody had a particular ailment, like the woman who had the issue of blood, remember, when she came to Christ, and she touched the hem of his garment, and she was cleansed, all of these were illustrations of the problem people had under the law through uncleanness.

[20 : 55] A common one, obviously, was the leper, who could not come into the company of other people, but who had to shout at the top of his voice as he walked along, unclean, unclean, and everybody would move away from him.

He was a lonesome figure because of his uncleanness due to the illness that he had. And these are pictures of what sin has done to us.

Left us unclean, left us in need of cleansing and forgiveness. And we see here that Christ is the one particularly who has done this work after making purification for sins.

Now it's not as clear in this particular translation of the scripture as it is in the Gaelic and in the authorized version. In the Gaelic, the one are picking through himself or by himself.

And there's an emphasis there in that Christ himself has done something in himself and by himself in order to bring this cleansing about.

[22 : 18] How did Christ, who is so glorious, the heir of all things, the creator of the worlds, the upholder of the universe, the expression of the Father's glory, the express or the exact imprint of his nature, how did he come to deal with such a problem?

I think there are programs on TV from time to time showing people who are hoarders at home and they just don't take it on themselves to clear out their property, they just leave stuff lying and maybe the council has to come and appoint people to clean out their property.

that's the kind of thing in a very more serious and solemn way that Christ has done, that he has come in the glory of his human nature, God-man, and he has come into the room and the house and the situation of those who have messed things up beyond their own ability to rectify it.

We have messed things up. We are filthy because our sins have left us so in the sight of God. And it says here that he has made purification.

How did this happen? Well, the scripture tells us that the Lord Jesus Christ, as our mediator, he took our sins upon himself.

[24 : 10] At the very point of his conception, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, the sins of his people were imputed to him.

And at that very point, he was the sin bearer. Oh, it was appointed in eternity in the council of redemption before the world was. And he, as the second person, as the mediator in the council of redemption, agreed to have this burden laid upon him when he would come into the world.

And when he came into the world, he came as the sin bearer. sin. And every step he took, he was bearing the sins of his people with the impurity and the uncleanness that that involved.

Not that he became unclean, he was not a sinner, he was not sinful or unclean in any aspect at all. Nevertheless, he was the bearer of this sin.

They were imputed to him. Remember what John the Baptist said when he saw Jesus walking one day, these marvelous words, Behold, the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world.

[25 : 38] And that tells us that at that very moment, he was carrying this awful burden, this awful unclean burden upon himself and in himself.

And what was he doing? Well, while he walked this world and lived in this world, he was fulfilling every aspect of God's law minutely.

He was magnifying the law and making it honorable. Every step and every word and every action, he magnified the law of God in the room instead of his people whose sins he was carrying so that he was magnifying the law in their room and in their place.

And he was carrying this burden and the terminus was the cross of Calvary. And there he was going to yield himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice and reconcile his people to God.

Isn't it amazing that he himself was the great high priest, he himself was the altar, he himself was the sacrifice, and he gave himself up as a willing sacrifice to satisfy the just demands of God.

[27 : 18] After making purification for sins, after giving God's justice, full recognition and a full answer, and full satisfaction, Jesus said on the cross, it is finished.

And in these marvelous words in the prophecy of Zechariah, when it says about the Lord Jesus on the cross, that he opened a fountain for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness.

What does that mean? It meant that in his sufferings unto death, I'll go back one word, it meant that in his life of obedience and sufferings unto death, he, as it were, dug this deep fountain whereby sin could now be cleansed because he opened an everlasting supply of cleansing efficacy through his own work of atonement.

Isn't the Lord amazing when he speaks through Isaiah chapter 1 at verse 18 and the Lord says, come now, let us reason together, says the Lord, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, though they be like crimson, they shall be like wool.

how is the Lord able to do this? Because of what the Lord Jesus Christ here has done. By himself, he made purification, he makes available in the gospel the source of cleansing and John says in that marvelous statement, if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

[29 : 34] The writer to the Hebrews, he focuses on the glory of the Savior as a person, as a mediator, and now he focuses on him as the one who made purification for sins in his obedient life and his atoning death.

But he's not finished yet. The third thing he brings before us is that now he is sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high.

The Jews were so taken up with angels and with Moses. Pharisees were full of allegiance to Moses.

They're missing the point completely. The one on whom they ought to have focused and to whom they ought to have been looking is this Savior.

And now he is sitting at the right hand of the majesty on high. Remember that the first step of Christ's exaltation was his resurrection.

[30 : 46] He rose on the third day. the women went to the sepulchre. They found it empty. Great disappointment initially. But then when he showed himself to Mary asking her why are you weeping?

Who are you looking for? If you, she says, have taken him away tell me where you have laid him and I will take him away.

Thinking him to be the gardener and he spoke to her. Mary. Immediately her heart knew who it was. Rabboni, she said, by master.

That's the first step of his exaltation. The second step of Christ's exaltation is his ascension into heaven. and the disciples saw him ascending until a cloud took him out of their sight.

And the angels came and said, why are you looking up into heaven? This same Jesus whom you saw going into heaven will come again just as you've seen him gone into heaven. And the third step of his exaltation is his sitting down at the right hand of God in heaven.

[32 : 05] There's a real contrast here between Christ's priesthood and the priesthood of Aaron and his successors in the Old Testament. Aaron and his successors as priests in the Old Testament they couldn't officially sit down.

Why? Because there was always sin to be atoned for. There was always a sacrifice to be given.

There was always work to be carried out by way of making reconciliation for the sins of the people.

But when Christ offered one sacrifice of himself he sat down forever because the work of reconciliation was finished and he is now officially sitting at the right hand of God having finished the work of atonement.

Certainly the work of the high priest Christ continues in that he is continually interceding for his people he who holds the universe in his hands is the one who's got your personal interests at heart. He who holds the whole universe together is the one who sees you ploughing your deep furrows of sorrow.

[33 : 30] He is the one who sees you with your questions. why? Why this? Why this providence? Why this term that I cannot explain in providence?

Well he knows why and he is the one who is the God of providence. Remember the catechism? God's works of providence are his most holy, wise, and powerful, preserving and governing all his creatures and all their actions.

And he's the one who is sitting on the throne. And he's the one who is making intercession for his people. There is one more step of exaltation to be experienced by Christ.

I mentioned three, the fourth one is his return, his second coming. But up until then he is interceding on behalf of his people at the right hand of glory.

[34 : 39] He knows you where you are. He knows the longing you have in your heart for fellowship with him. He knows your questions, he knows your difficulties, your discouragements, your doubts.

How do you know? that you are born upon his heart in his intercession? Well, somebody once said to me, there is a real way of knowing that you are being interceded for by Christ at the right hand of glory.

when you are aware of his love filling your heart, when you are aware of his fellowship, however momentary, nevertheless, it is proof that your affairs and that your passion are remembered at the right hand of glory by this almighty savior, who has made purification for sin and who now rules to promote your cause as a believer, to promote the work of the church in the world, to promote his own kingdom in the world, and he taught the disciples in the Lord's prayer, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven, and his kingdom will come because he is on the throne of his kingdom, and even the hordes of hell cannot destroy his kingdom, cannot even destroy the feeblest of his saints, however feeble you might feel, however vulnerable you might feel, he is your king, he is the mighty

God of Jacob, who encourages you to continue to look to him as the one who is able to do in you, and for you, exceeding abundantly above what you are able to ask, or even think.

The Hebrews heard these words, and the apostle goes right through the epistle, making argument after argument, in relation to the glory of the saviour, and the glory of his finished work, and he says, we have to run our race with patience, looking unto Jesus, who is the author and finisher of our feet.

[37 : 26] May God bless these thoughts. Let us pray. Amen.