

The Exaltation Of Christ

The preeminence of Jesus is discussed in many New Testament passages. In fact, the Colossian letter has this subject as its theme. In that letter Paul states that Jesus *"is the firstborn of all creation;"* that *"he is before all things, and in him all things consist;"* that *"in all things he is to have pre-eminence;"* in him *"all the fullness dwells;"* that in him *"dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily"* (1:15;17, 18, 19; 2:5). In addition to these verse might be cited many more -- all showing that God has exalted His Son to the highest seat of authority man can conceive of. The Hebrew letter says, *"God has spoken ... in his Son whom he appointed heir of all things ..."* (1:2f). Who is this Son and why has God exalted Him to the place He occupies? Hebrews one give many answers to these questions.

First, this Son is identified as Him *"through whom he made the worlds"* (1:2). The unanimous testimony of New Testament writers attribute to Jesus that the worlds were made by Him. In John's prologue to his gospel he wrote, *"all things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that hath been made"* and *"he was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not"* (Jn. 1:3; 10). Jehovah's witnesses meet a fatal blow in John one. Their doctrine is that Jesus was merely a creature. Since all things were made by Jesus, and without Him was not anything made that hath been made, their doctrine is reduced to the ridiculous position that Jesus must have made Himself!

Second, this exalted Son is said to be the *"effulgence"* of His (God's) glory. The word *"effulgence"* is defined by W.E. Vine as *"light shining from a luminous body"* (W. E. Vine, Vol. II, p. 19). Mr. Vine adds the following comment: *"The Son, being one with the Father in Godhood, is in Himself, and ever was, the shining forth of the glory, manifested in himself all that God is and does"* (IBID.). Thus, Jesus reflects all the glory and grandeur of God.

Third, this exalted Son not only reflects the glory of God but He is the *"express image of his substance ..."* (1:3). The writer was not content simply to say that Jesus radiates the glory and brightness of Deity; he adds that whatever the nature of the Father is equally the nature of the son. Philippians 2:6f tells that Jesus, *"existed in the form of God ... but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of man."* Some, desiring to avoid the fact of the Deity of Christ, say that Jesus only existed in the form of God, but was not really God. If this is valid reasoning, it applies also to the following statement: *"made in the form of a servant."* If the word *"form of God"* means Jesus was not really God; the *"form of a servant"*

means Jesus was not really man. Such reasoning reduces Jesus to a nonentity. But, this is error. Jesus was God and man.

Fourth, this exalted Son *"upholdeth all things by the word of his power"* (Heb. 1:4). The Son still functions in the workings of the world. It continues to operate with the same preciseness as it has in millenniums past. The Son is still active in the affairs of men and nations. While men are not puppets, we must never forget that *"in him we live, and move and have our being"* (Acts 17:28).

Fifth, this exalted Son made *"purification for sins"* (1:4). The writer deals more explicitly in how this purification was accomplished further in the letter and he not only here but in almost universally all Paul's letters testifies that Jesus put away sins by the sacrifice of Himself. First Corinthians tells that *"Christ died for our sins"* (1 Cor. 15:2f); that *"him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf"* (2 Cor. 5:21). The Galatian letter states that the *"Son of God loved me, and gave himself for me"* (2:20).

Because Christ *"humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea the death of the cross;"* God *"highly exalted him and gave unto the name that is above every name"* (Phil. 2:8). The position occupied by Jesus is one He richly deserves! Well spake the poet: "All hail the power of Jesus name, let angels prostrate fall, Bring forth the royal diadem and crown him Lord of all."

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