

The Assertion of Christ's Deity

By David Harrell

Bible Text: Hebrews 1:1-3
Preached on: Sunday, September 25, 2016

Starting the letter to the Hebrews, actually last week you will recall I did just a survey, an introduction, an overview and this morning we will actually begin to dig into the text itself so take your Bibles and turn to Hebrews 1 and we will be examining in a little bit the first three verses and I have entitled my discourse to you this morning "The Assertion of Christ's Deity," and whenever I contemplate the reality of being in a living union with the Triune Godhead through faith in Christ, the eternal Son of God, I am struck with such a profound sense of adoration and awe and I'm just left speechless. Do you know that feeling when you're thinking about that and it really grips your heart, you just don't know what to say. It's overwhelming. And my personal study of this letter to the Hebrews with its visions of the deity and the majesty of the exalted Christ in contrast with his humanity and suffering that fulfilled the old covenant promises, all of that only enhances my adulation and reverence for my Savior and King and I hope that that will also happen to you as we go through this study and, frankly, if you will ask the Holy Spirit to discipline your mind, soften your heart to the riches that we will unearth in this study, I have no doubt that you will be forever changed because that is what the word will do for those who humble themselves before it.

This morning I would like to examine the first three verses that, as I say, assert the deity of Christ which is the most fundamental truth of the Gospel of God. But before I do, I believe it's important for us to understand why this is so profoundly important not only with respect to those first century Hebrews back in those days, but also to 21st century believers today as well as unbelievers.

Now, you will recall from our survey and our introduction that this epistle is written primarily to Jewish believers who are tempted to compromise their faith and fall back into Judaism because of persecution and so this letter is filled with exhortations to "consider Jesus." Don't do what your ancestors did in the wilderness when they stopped trusting God and they wanted to go back to Egypt and therefore they never entered into the Promised Land. In fact, in Hebrews 4:14 we read, "since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession."

Now, you must understand that those first century Jews believed that Jesus was the Son of God. I'm referring to, obviously, the believing Jews. They believed that he was the true Messiah that was prophesied in the Old Testament, that he was the one that was going to suffer, that he would rise from the dead and so forth. They also proclaimed that he would one day return to judge the world, to renovate the earth, to return it again back to Edenic splendor and establish his messianic kingdom. In fact, that's what Peter preached in Acts

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3. He said, beginning in verse 19, "repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time."

So they believed all of this to be true and, of course, it is but they thought that it was going to happen very soon. In fact, the Holy Spirit here quotes Isaiah in Hebrews 10:37, "For yet in a very little while, He who is coming will come, and will not delay." But this letter is written some 35 years after Jesus' ascension back into glory and he still hadn't returned and he would, I should say if he would return, all of the unbelieving Jews would say, "Wow, this is true," and they would believe. But he hadn't and so doubt began to set in, began to invade their heart, and the persecution continued to mount and they began to question some of the things that they believed and the most fundamental question before them that they struggled with was the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Moreover, think about it, for centuries they had quoted the Shema which is the Hebrew word for "hear," which was basically the Jewish confession of faith. They quoted it, at least the devout Jews would quote it twice a day. It's recorded in Deuteronomy 6:4, "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!" But now Jesus comes along and he claims to be God as well, the Son of God, and unbelieving Jews are saying, "That's ridiculous. There's only one God. And all of these believing Jews believe that there is not just one God, that there are three Gods. There is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit." Which, of course, is untrue. There is only one God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but he exists eternally in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, each equally deserving of our worship and praise. And another problem that those believers faced is that the unbelieving Jews are seeing all of these Gentiles come to faith in this Son of God which made them all the more hostile to Christianity because the Gentiles were these disgusting idolaters that just believed in anything and everything and so this added no credibility to the cause of Christianity.

So these are the things they're dealing with. Their hearts were beginning to question their faith in Christ. It's as if they were saying, "Am I really willing to give up my Judaism? All the magnificent heritage of my religion: the temple, the sacrifices, the ceremonies, the rituals, the traditions, even my family and my friends. Am I really willing to give all of that up for something that may not be true?" You know, some of you may be tempted to do the same. Your faith is weak, if it exists at all, and do you know what feeds that cancer is a person's misunderstanding and lack of conviction of the deity of Christ. And this is one of Satan's greatest ploys, it always has been, to somehow distort the person and the work of the Lord Jesus. In 2 Corinthians 4, beginning in verse 3, the Apostle Paul says,

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"And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world," referring to Satan, "has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."

Now, let me show you what is really at stake before we look at these first three verses. The Spirit of God makes this very clear. Turn to Hebrews 10 and beginning in verse 29. Here's what the Spirit says, "How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has," and then he's going to list three things, first of all, "trampled under foot the Son of God," in other words, deliberately and perhaps with spite, trampled under foot the Son of God. Notice he says "the Son of God," not Jesus, though he is, but the Son of God. Those who with full conscience and strength of mind deny the deity of Christ and, of course, that was the position of the unbelieving Jews.

But not only that, number 2, "and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified." The term "unclean" can be translated "unholy." It's rooted in a term that refers to that which was considered to be common or without value. As I was meditating upon this, I remember when I was a little boy, I was walking with my father in a large gravel parking lot and I saw a penny, looked at it for a moment and I took it and threw it as hard as I could just what little boys do, and my dad made me find that penny. I wish I had kept it. Yes, it was only a penny but there was a valuable lesson to be taught there and that is to learn about the value of even the smallest things, not to throw money away and so forth. Now, by comparison, Christ is infinitely more valuable than a penny and yet many people treat Christ like I treated that penny, they just throw him away. He's useless to them. Moreover, as we look at this text, if the blood of Christ is considered unclean, in other words, just a common thing, just without value, then the new covenant must also be without value, utterly invalid, completely worthless because it was signed and sealed by the mere blood of a human, not the blood of the Son of God.

And finally think of the severer judgment for those who have "insulted the Spirit of grace." Notice he doesn't say the Holy Spirit, even though that's what he is, but the Spirit of grace. In other words, the one who came down at Pentecost to convict them of their sins and offered them grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

So how much severer punishment for those of you who know the truth and yet you deliberately deny the deity of Christ, you regard his sacrifice as worthless, and you insult the Spirit of grace. The point is: if you go back to Judaism, that's what you're doing. If you compromise in your faith, that's what you're doing. You're basically saying, "I do not believe Jesus was the Son of God. I reject that gift of grace. I don't need forgiveness. My own righteousness will be sufficient to secure my salvation. So I'll just keep earning my

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way to heaven by keeping the law, observing the rituals, being a part of all of the festivals and ceremonies, making sacrifices." I mean, folks, talk about insulting the Spirit of grace.

Verse 30 of that text goes on to say, "For we know Him who said, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay.' And again, 'The Lord will judge His people.' It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God." I often shudder when I read that verse because I have family and I have friends who unless they repent will one day fall into the hands of the living God. What an unbearable thought. And why would that happen? Because they trample underfoot the Son of God. They regard as unclean the blood of the covenant. And they insult the Spirit of grace.

Dear friends, don't miss this: believing in the deity of Christ is essential for genuine saving faith and that is what really animates genuine worship and obedience. Acknowledging him as the Son of God is the most fundamental of all issues. According to Matthew 26, beginning in verse 63 and there in the context Jesus is standing before the high priest and the priest says to him, "I adjure You by the living God, that You tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God." Jesus said to him, 'You have said it yourself; nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.' Then the high priest tore his robes and said, 'He has blasphemed! What further need do we have of witnesses? Behold, you have now heard the blasphemy; what do you think?' They answered, 'He deserves death!' Then they spat in His face and beat Him with their fists; and others slapped Him, and said, 'Prophecy to us, You Christ; who is the one who hit You?'" So, folks, this was the attitude of these first century Jews. It's also the attitude of those of you who share their belief and this will also be your fate unless you repent and believe.

I ask you: do you really believe that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God? And if so, conducting your life in a manner consistent with your belief is what really validates the genuineness of your profession. John speaks of this in 1 John 5, beginning in verse 1, "Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome. For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world - our faith. Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?"

Dear friends, of course the cost of discipleship, the cost of following Christ is great but the value is infinite, it's beyond imagination, and yet how easy it is for us to be intimidated by foolish men that are dead in their sins; to be frightened by a hostile world,

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especially if we are not tolerant of all truth claims no matter how preposterous they might be. Think of how the world reacts to biblical Christianity which, frankly, is in short supply these days. I mean, if we're not politically and religiously correct, we're mocked, we're ridiculed. We're supposed to be tolerant like them. But dear friends, though the cost of discipleship is high, as I say, the value is infinite, but a person will never deny himself and follow Christ come what may unless he really knows how he is and that's a great work of the Spirit, and this is where the Holy Spirit begins in this letter of exhortation. You will recall, again, in chapter 13 and verse 22, the letter is described as a "word of exhortation."

So now with that introduction, let's turn our attention to the first three verses of this exhortation where the Spirit asserts Christ's deity and I wish to examine this text under three categories that I hope will be helpful to you. 1. We're going to look at Christ's superiority over the prophets. Secondly, Christ's fulfillment of all that was prophesied. And then finally, we're going to look at some practical implications of his deity for our lives.

Now, as we approach this, remember the method of argumentation that the Holy Spirit uses here through his inspired author. It's the idea of comparing something lesser to something that is greater. Again, that was a common method in those days. If something small is true, how much greater is its larger and more important counterpart? How much more is it true? And we see this very comparison beginning here in these first three verses where the Spirit begins to affirm the deity of Christ.

So let me read the text to you. Hebrews 1, beginning in verse 1.

1 God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, 2 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. 3 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,

Dear friends, will you notice the great crescendo of thought that climaxes at the end. He begins by saying, "God has spoken to us by his Son," and then he goes on to use six power-packed subordinate clauses in the Greek, all of which attest to some aspect of Christ's deity. He is the one whom he appointed heir of all things, the one through whom he made the world. He is the radiance of God's glory, the exact representation of his power. He upholds all things by the word of his power. He has provided purification for

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sins. And now here's the triumphant grand finale, he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high. What a magnificent testimony of the Savior who was crucified, resurrected and who has ascended back into glory; a testimony that only God himself could make because he alone is the source of truth. He is his own evidence.

Now, let's look more closely at, first of all, Christ's superiority over the prophets. Again, verse 1, "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways." Now, let's pause here for a moment. Remember, God must speak to man in order to reveal himself. Man is incapable of understanding God on his own. He cannot transcend his own finiteness. He cannot understand the supernatural because he is confined in his own sinful fallen nature. His mind is darkened.

Now, through conscience and through reason, man knows that God exists. There is really no such thing as an atheist. He knows in his heart that God exists, therefore he is without excuse, but he doesn't know who he really is. None of us would know who he really is were it not for divine revelation. We cannot know about his person, his plan, his purposes, his will, apart from divine revelation and that's why we read in 2 Timothy 3:16 that all Scripture is inspired by God. It is breathed out by God. There are 39 books in the Old Testament, 27 books in the New Testament and throughout Scripture, you will see how God reveals spiritual truths to us that we would have never have known had he not done so.

And he began this revelation by inspiring his Old Testament prophets to be his mouthpieces. There were some 40+ writers who delivered the word of God over a period of 14 or I should say, 1,500 years. Thus he says here, "He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways," which means that sometimes he would speak to them in visions and then those prophets would speak in maybe a parable or present to us a type or a symbol. They would speak through poetry, through prophesy, through narrative. It is always inspired by God, it was always infallible, it was always completely authoritative but it was never complete. His revelation was progressive, always increasing in clarity and in truth, all the way through the New Testament from promise to fulfillment. In fact, much of the Old Testament, the prophets didn't understand. We read about this, for example, in 1 Peter 1, beginning in verse 10, "As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven - things into which angels long to look." But now that Christ has come, the New Testament Canon is complete and we can look back

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and we can see clearly what the Old Testament never really understood. By the way, it is an amazing time to be alive, isn't it? It is absolutely astounding. So now we have God's perfect full and final revelation completed when his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, came to earth and so in verse 2, he says, "in these last days has spoken to us in His Son." By the way, the Jews were familiar with this concept of the last days. It referred to the days of messianic fulfillment when the Messiah would come, when he would bring salvation to Israel, establish his kingdom and so forth.

So we've seen here, first of all, Christ's superiority over the prophets but, secondly, notice Christ's fulfillment of all that was prophesied. Again, verse 2, "in these last days 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." I hope you see, again, the method of argumentation: the prophets were the lesser, Jesus Christ the Son of God, is the greater. And underlying all of this is the idea of: why would you possibly go back to the lesser and forsake the greater? He is the ultimate, the final. He is the pre-eminent prophet. He alone has given us the full and final and perfect revelation.

But, folks, this is also an affirmation, therefore, of Christ's deity. He is the Son of God. He is the Alpha, he is the Omega. He is the beginning and the end. And as we look at these first three verses, we see really a comprehensive declaration of who Jesus really is. I like to think of it this way, if I can summarize it very briefly. First of all, he is the consummator of all things because as the text says in verse 2, he is the heir of all things. He is also the Creator of all things because he made the world, verse 2. He is the sustainer of all things because he upholds all things by the word of his power, the end of verse 3. And also he is the Redeemer of all of his elect because he made purification of sins and has now sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high. So here God gives testimony. Jesus is the Son of God. And he gives it in a way that we can understand it, especially if we look at the progression of history and redemption. You might think of it this way and you hear me say this from time to time: he is the Creator, the Sustainer, the Redeemer and the Consummator of all things and we see that here in these first three verses.

So what's the point? Don't go back to Judaism. Don't compromise. Or I would say to those of you who for one reason or another continue to willfully reject God's gift of grace, you know the Gospel intellectually but you deliberately refuse to humble yourself. Don't trample underfoot the Son of God. Don't regard as unclean the blood of the covenant. Don't insult the Spirit of grace or you will fall into the hands of the living God.

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Now, let's look more closely at these attestations to his deity. First of all, notice that he is the Creator and heir of all things. Again, verse 2, the Father has appointed the Son to be "heir of all things, through whom also He made the world." The term "world" is "aion" in the original language and it refers to the totality of the universe. The Lord Jesus made everything that is in the universe. This refers to, or I should say it includes time and space and energy, matter, all of the fixed inviolable laws of physics. Now, bear in mind this is absolutely antithetical to what people believe today. I mean, think about it, imagine the reaction if the government's National Education Association were to announce, "Dear friends, we no longer will allow any curriculum in our public schools or any teacher to teach our children that the origin of the universe is the result of a big bang, some explosive moment approximately 15 billion years ago. We're no longer going to allow that. We're no longer going to allow people to say that the universe is self-existent; that it has no meaning, it has no purpose. Nor will we allow any curriculum or teacher to advance the demonstrably false lie of evolutionary theory which promotes the absurd conclusion that man is really nothing more than a sophisticated germ without meaning and purpose. We're no longer going to allow that." You're smiling because obviously, "Boy, yeah, that'll never happen." Instead they're going to say, "Our curriculum and our teacher will promote the truth that God himself has given us. We would have never known this had he not given it to us and the truth is this: the universe has meaning and purpose. It is not self-existent, rather the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, created the universe and he sustains all things and the whole universe has been created for him. It exists for him because it says that God the Father has appointed him heir of all things through whom also he made the world." Imagine a presidential candidate running on that platform.

And why would people be so violently opposed to that? It's simple: they do not believe in the deity of Christ. It's fundamental. Of course, we also know that they are spiritually dead. They have exchanged the truth for a lie. They worship the creature rather than the Creator and to the natural man the things of the Spirit are considered foolishness. They cannot understand them because they have no capacity to discern spiritual truth. They don't believe what Paul said in Colossians 1:16, "For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities - all things have been created through Him and for Him." Or what Paul said in Romans 11:36, "For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen." So the Father appointed the Son to be heir of all things, and do you know what's even more amazing to me is to think that believers have been eternally united to Christ and we are to be, according to Romans 8:16, fellow heirs with Christ. I mean, let that sink in. We are fellow heirs with Christ. We are going to participate in his inheritance.

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But he's not only the Creator and heir of the universe, secondly in verse 3, we see "He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature." The term "radiance" actually means in the original language "to send forth light." So, in other words, Christ is the effulgence. He is the radiant splendor. He is the brilliance of God's glory. That's also in the present tense which means that Christ is and will always continue to be the manifestation of the glory of God because like the Father and the Spirit, he is God.

Now, Scripture is clear that no man has ever seen God the Father. That has never happened at any time and not even Moses on the mount when God allowed him to only see his backside, what Moses saw was a glimpse of the glory of the Creator, Sustainer, Redeemer and Consummator of all things. He saw a glimpse of the Son of God who would later come to earth in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

He saw the radiance of the glory of Christ who is also, the text says, "the exact representation of his nature." "Representation" is a Greek term "ikon" and we get our word "icon" from that, which means "a precise copy." He is the perfect reproduction, if you will, of God. You remember in John 10:30, Jesus said, "I and my Father are one." I am the effulgence of the glory of the Father. I am the very image, the very impress, the very imprint of his substance. In John 14:9, Jesus told Philip, "He who has seen Me has seen," what? "Has seen the Father." And Paul said in Colossians 2:9, "For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form."

Now, think of this: Christ manifested the glory of the Father in his Incarnation. Moreover, he manifests the glory of the Father in creation, all that we see and hear and taste and smell and feel, all that we experience in this magnificent universe. I was thinking of Psalm 19:1, "For the heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands."

As I was thinking about this, my mind went to a few facts that I'll give you just to blow your mind a little bit when you really think of the glory of Christ and all that he manifests in his creation. The sun is about 400 times more distant than the moon, they tell us, but remarkably it is also 400 times larger. What a coincidence. They tell us that the sun is over 100 times the diameter of the earth and if it were hollow, it could hold over one million earths. They tell us that our galaxy called the Milky Way contains over 100 billion stars and the Bible says that God calls them all by their names. Yet our galaxy, we now understand, is not the only one. There are innumerable other galaxies with a wide range of shapes and sizes. It's estimated that there are at least as many galaxies as there are stars in the Milky Way, which they estimate to be 100 billion. That's just what we're basically aware of at this point. I mean, truly the heavens declare the glory of God and the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

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You see, the beauty of the seas and the mountains and the plants and the stars and all the colors that we see, the sounds of music, the birth of a baby, the laughter of children, the majestic flight of an eagle, the sight of lightning, I mean, I could go on and on for hours, everything manifests the glory of God and who created all of these things? The heir of all these things. The radiance of God's glory, the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. Who could possibly reject him? The answer is only those who live in moral darkness who have been blinded by their sinful nature and by Satan who blinds their minds. Without the radiating light of the glory of God in Christ, all men would perish in the darkness that they prefer because their deeds are evil.

Notice, thirdly, "He upholds all things by the word of His power." An amazing concept. The term "uphold" carries the idea "of bearing; of maintaining; of governing." An active sustaining the universe that he created, bringing it to its final goal and destiny which is to bring glory to God and his eternal kingdom. Everything is moving in that direction and the Lord Jesus is going to make sure that it continues to move the way it's supposed to. This, of course, is included in the miracle of divine providence that essentially says that God is continually involved with his creation; that he maintains their existence and the properties with which he created them. He directs them to fulfill his plans and purposes. Colossians 3:17, "He," referring to Christ, "is before all things and in Him all things hold together." In other words, he is before all things in time and rank and he is sustaining everything. He's carrying it along to accomplish the purposes of God. It's amazing when you think about it. Even when Jesus was an embryo in his mother's womb, he was holding all things together. It adds a new perspective to it, doesn't it?

I mean, folks, this is staggering. When we look around, we do not see chaos, we see order in the material universe. We see inviolable fixed laws of physics. We see how they maintain the unity of all these complex systems. Can you imagine what would happen if the Lord Jesus stopped holding all things together? They tell us that the slightest change in the rate of the earth's rotation around the sun or the most minute change of angle on its axis would cause us to either freeze or burn. Yesterday I'm thinking that it was tilting a little bit in one direction. Physicists tell us that the slightest change in the mass of the proton would result in the dissolution of hydrogen atoms which would cause the entire universe to dissolve into oblivion. Physicists are still utterly baffled in trying to understand why the nucleus of an atom, how it holds together. They just can't figure that out. Well, we know because God has told us. Eventually the one who holds all of these protons together will release them in final judgment and the nuclei of the atoms are going to fly apart. Peter describes this in 2 Peter 3:10, "the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up." You see, friends, a day is coming when the pre-existent, self-existent,

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uncreated Creator of the universe is going to uncreate what he has created and then he is going to recreate a new heavens and a new earth where righteousness will dwell. This is who Christ is. This is who we worship.

Ah, but there are two more attestations to his deity. Again, notice verse 3, it says, "When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high." I like the way the King James puts it, "When he had by himself purged our sins." I mean, this was just staggering to the early Jews and it should be to us as well. But then it goes on to add, "He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high." This would have been incomprehensible to them because, as you will recall, there were no seats in the temple. Why? Because the work of the priest was never finished. Day in and day out, they butchered thousands and thousands and millions and millions of animals. Sacrifices to make atonement for sin. Atonement requires two things: it requires satisfaction and it requires substitution. But what we see here is the atoning work of Christ satisfied the justice of God through his death as our substitute once and for all. That's it. We don't any more of those things. Something the Old Testament sacrifices could never do. When he offered himself up on the cross, he finally shouted, "It is finished!" The writer of Hebrews says this in chapter 7, verse 26, "For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself."

Folks, I must add that his death not only paid the penalty for your sins and for mine, for all who would trust in him as their only hope of salvation, but it also makes possible the eventual reconciliation of all things to God. As Colossians 1:20 says, "whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through His blood shed on the cross." Absolutely amazing. So the point is: how can you possibly trample underfoot the Son of God? How can you possibly regard as unclean the blood of the covenant? And how can you possibly insult the Spirit of grace?

Well, finally and I close with a few thoughts regarding the implications of the deity of Christ in our lives and in so doing, I just found this so encouraging to me and I also found as I jotted down the notes, I have about three hours worth of things that could come out of this but I'm going to give you just a few minutes and hopefully it will animate you for further study. But I want to encourage you as I was encouraged, first of all, dear friends, will you be encouraged that you know who Christ is? That you know who he really is? Do you realize what a gift that is? What a blessing that is? That's a gift from God. You see, unbelievers don't know that and they don't care. Oh, they may think that there may be

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The Assertion of Christ's Deity

By David Harrell

Bible Text: Hebrews 1:1-3
Preached on: Sunday, September 25, 2016

some merit of truth to it somehow in the universe but it's all mixed up with all of these other religions so it's no big deal.

I was reading John MacArthur on this and what he had to say I thought was so, it just encouraged my heart. I just want to share it with you. He said, quote, "When I think about Christ's power to uphold the universe, that truth goes right to my heart. We read in Philippians 1:6 the wonderful promise, 'For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.' When Christ begins a work in your heart, he holds onto it and sustains it all the way through. We can imagine Jude's excitement when he wrote, 'Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, through the only God, our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord be glory, majesty, dominion and authority before all time and now and forever. Amen.'" Then finally he says, "When your life is given to Jesus Christ, he holds it and sustains it and one day will take it into God's very presence. A life just as a universe that is not sustained by Christ is chaos."

But also can I encourage you because you know that he has now been seated at the right hand of the Father. Why? Let me tell you why: because this not only signifies his position of highest honor and authority, but it also symbolizes two other things that are so extremely encouraging to me. 1. He is now in a position to intercede for us. Do you realize that? Romans 8:34, "Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us." Folks, do you realize what that means? What that means is that when we sin, Christ intercedes on our behalf. He comes to our defense against Satan and any others who might bring charges against us. In him, according to 1 John 2:1, "we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." And for this reason and many others, our salvation is eternally secure. To say otherwise would deny the sufficiency of his atoning work and the power of his intercession on our behalf. Hebrews 7:25 we read that Jesus Christ "is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them." Is that encouraging or what?

And if I can be kind but forthright, when I hear people argue that a true believer can do something to lose his salvation, my mind is, first of all, flooded with Scripture that affirms the very opposite. I mean, what? Are we going to say that the Father is up there and he looks down and says, "Oh-no, we lost another one!" We lost another one, and then Jesus turns to him and says, "Well, wait a minute. I thought we gave him eternal life? I thought we caused him to be born again? I thought we made him a new creature? I thought we imputed my righteousness to his account? Can our election be refuted? Can a man's sin rescind my imputed righteousness? Is our will subject to the will of man? I

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thought it was just the other way around? Was my atoning work on his behalf deficient? Will you deny my intercession on his behalf?" I mean, folks, as you can see, this is not only ridiculous, it's blasphemous. And I'm not only profoundly grateful that he saved me, but I'm also profoundly grateful that he keeps me for I could do neither one. I couldn't save myself and I couldn't keep myself. Oh, the joy of eternal life, of eternal safe-keeping, of eternal love that began in eternity past. How can any believer not love and serve the Lord Jesus Christ and his church?

But secondly, he not only intercedes for us but he is now seated at the right hand of the Father and that is a sign of ruling authority. Let me close with this thought. This, again, this is so encouraging to me because I am sick up to here with all of the political garbage that we hear day in and day out. When I look at the corruption of our government, the wickedness of our politicians, the sheer insanity of our culture, the moral freefall, sometimes I feel like I'm in a parallel universe and really we are, right? I mean, we're aliens here. I mean, it's just incomprehensible. I mean, $2 + 2$ is no longer 4, it equals whatever you want it to equal and if we're not careful, we can begin to think that God has forsaken us, that he has lost control. But friends, nothing could be further from the truth. The Lord Jesus Christ is seated in a position of authority at the right hand of God. 1 Peter 3:22, "angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him."

So he's in control. His plans, his purposes will never be thwarted so stop panicking. Stop wringing your hands and I have to preach to myself here as well. In fact, and I'm not going to tell you what to do here, but I'm not about to watch the presidential debates. I mean, folks, the inmates are now running the asylum. The chimpanzees are now running the zoo. I mean, it's crazy. Listening to two politicians debate each other is like listening to two delusional cooks on the Titanic fighting over who can make the better breakfast as the ship is sinking. I mean, it's just absurd. Beloved, get serious about our kingdom, not all these kingdoms here on the earth. They're all falling apart. Rejoice in the fact that Christ is God and he is seated at the right hand of the Father.

Let me make it even more practical: get serious about serving Christ who has promised to come again. Husbands, start loving your wives in ways that you never have before so that people can see through your marriage the glory of God's transforming work; the covenantal love of Christ to those who will trust in him. Start shepherding your family like Christ shepherds you, shepherds his church. Wives, start loving your husbands in ways that you never have. Pray for the Spirit to ignite your hearts with a zeal for holiness, for evangelism. Young people, get serious about being salt and light, assuming you know Christ. If you don't, you need to start there. I mean, take all of your social media and all those little gadgets you play with all the time and absolutely unleash the Gospel on everybody that you know, all of those millions and billions of people that you're sending

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all your information out to. Unleash the Gospel on them. Celebrate who Christ is. Let's all commit ourselves to being a living doxology because we know who Christ really is. We know what is happening in the world and we ought to celebrate this, celebrate the deity of our Savior and our King. Amen?

Let's pray together.

Father, we rejoice in these eternal truths that have such profound implications in our lives. I pray that we will allow them to sink deep within the soil of our heart that we might bear much fruit for your glory and for our joy. And for those that do not know you as Savior and there perhaps is someone here in this worship center that is in that category, Lord, I pray that you will overwhelm them with the guilt that is theirs that they might run to the cross and cry out for undeserved mercy and grace that they will receive so freely. We pray that today will be the day that they will repent, that they will place their trust in you, by your grace, by your power. I ask all of this in Jesus' precious name. Amen.

We pray you've been edified by this presentation. You have been listening to Pastor, Bible Teacher and Author, Dr. David Harrell. For more information or for other messages from Dr. Harrell, please visit the Olive Tree Christian Resources website at otcr.org.