

# Seven Excellencies of Christ (Part 3)

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[ 0 : 00 ] We're continuing our study of the seven excellencies of Christ found in the opening words of the epistle of the Hebrews.

! These excellencies explain at least in part as to why Christ Jesus is superior in all things. And the seven excellencies listed are His airship, that's H-E-I-R, His creatorship, His radiance, His being, His administration, His sacrifice, and His exaltation.

And we looked at three of them thus far, and we're going to pick up our lesson this evening with His being. And actually my plans are, unless I drop over, which could happen, is to finish the seven excellencies.

The next excellency of Christ is His being, which is contained in the same sentence with radiance. That passage reads as follows. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature, or the exact imprint of His being.

[ 1 : 27 ] We're going to focus on the second portion of that scripture, which depicts the Lord Jesus as the exact imprint of His nature.

The word imprint is used in the English Standard Version, which I'm quoting from. The New American Standard uses the word's exact representation. That is a good translation and is used by MacArthur in his commentary on Hebrews.

I do believe that the word's exact imprint comes closer to the correct translation from the Greek language based on the information I saw.

The word used in the original Greek language comes from a word that is used to describe an impression made by a die or a stamp on a seal.

They would make the seal by putting an imprint on what was desired on wax and then reproducing it. The Lord Jesus is an exact reproduction of God the Father.

[ 2 : 38 ] Put another way, the Lord Jesus is the perfect personal imprint of God in space and time. There's a great passage in Colossians that may help us out a little bit, 1.15.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. Now, to the finite mind, that is almost beyond comprehension.

The word for image there in the Greek language is icon, and we get the English word icon. It's spelled different, but it's our English word icon. Icon. Icon means a precise image in which there is no flaw.

Only God could pull that off. It is a precise copy. It is an exact representation. In the culture of the Hebrews, one might think of the finest sculpture or portrait.

When someone says that Jesus is the icon of God, they're saying that He is the exact and precise reproduction.

[ 3 : 51 ] We're also told this truth in another Colossians verse, 2.9. For in Him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily. There are additional inspired passages that I believe speak strongly to this issue.

For example, in John 10.30, I and the Father are one. John 14.8 and 11, we all read that at funerals, if you ever put on a funeral. Philip said to Him, Lord, show us the Father, and it's enough for us.

And Jesus said to him, have I been with you so long and you still don't know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say to me, show us the Father?

Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I say to you, I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his own works.

Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves. The fifth excellency of Christ that we'll take a look at is His administration.

[ 5 : 02 ] By administration, the passage is referring to the administration of the entire universe. There's a bunch. Hebrews 1.3 in the middle there.

And He upholds the universe by the word of His power. We talked about it a little bit in one of the first lessons. And I want to mention three truths about the Lord.

He made everything. He will one day inherit everything. And He holds everything in the entire universe together.

So He's the creator. He's the sustainer. And He's holding it all together. We talked about dark matter and how they've come up with that. Well, there's something out there mysterious. We don't know what it is. It's holding the universe together. It's called Jesus glue. You know? We've already seen that He's the creator of all things.

[ 6 : 00 ] Now we learn He's the upholder of all things. And when you look this word up in a Greek dictionary, you learn that He's not speaking of uphold in the sense of a fictional atlas with the world on His shoulders.

It is better translated, talking about Jesus, He carries the universe. That's an amazing concept. The Son of God carries all things to bring them to their desired end.

How does He do that? By a mere utterance. He doesn't go home at night and work out before bedtime. By a mere utterance.

He utters a word and all things listen in obedience to His voice. Nothing else is needed.

His word is enough to bring about the desired effect. He spoke the universe into existence.

[ 7 : 05 ] He carries the universe by His word. One day He will speak. And the present universe will go out of existence to make room for a new one. And for those of us who love astronomy, we get to watch.

For now we base our lives on the continuance and consistency of natural laws in the universe. Can you imagine the chaos, however brief, if the Lord said, you know in the morning just for fun I'm going to suspend gravity.

If He did that for a microsecond, we would all perish. At sea level, air pressure is 14.7 pounds per square inch.

There's a reason for that. Air pressure forces our lungs to breathe in. You can breathe out, but you can't hold it.

Air pressure is forcing you to take a breath. That's one of the reasons we can sleep confidently knowing that we're going to continue to breathe. He holds our very breath in His hands.

[ 8 : 14 ] If He chooses not to, we all die. That simple. So the entire universe really is in a delicate balance. There are no maverick molecules that are outside the sovereign control of Christ.

I'm quoting there Dr. Sproul. The entire universe is under the powerful words of the living Christ. That's why the psalmist says he laughs in derision at the plans of men.

That is a way of making sure that the universe does exactly what the Lord wants it to do. And the universe is amazing. It's a timepiece. Up there where I live and I can actually see it.

Out in the country. And I turn my switch off so the light doesn't interfere. It's a timepiece. So there is great and mighty power in the words of Christ.

Now for purposes of this lesson, we are basically considering physics. I did wonderful in there.

[ 9 : 25 ] I dropped the course. But are there any words of Christ in Scripture that are not powerful? And the answer is of course not. They're all powerful.

They have God behind them. I want to try out a couple tonight. Philippians 1.6 I'm sure of this, that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

That's the powerful words of the Spirit of God revealing that Jesus is going to bring everything to completion. We believe that Christ is presently upholding the universe.

Do we also believe this passage? What about the doxology found at the end of the brief book of Jude? I love that book. You can get more out of that. Is that believable also?

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling and present you blameless before the presence of His glory with great joy to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority before all time, now, and forever.

[ 10 : 52 ] And He ends it with amen, meaning so be it. Those are powerful words on which someone can build trust and faith in our Savior.

Powerful words. The next excellency in our list is number seven, His sacrifice. After making purification for sins, that's His sacrifice.

How did He make purification? Christ is superior because He alone has made purification for the sins of His people. That is a reference to His mediatorial work on the cross.

The Lord Christ is our mediator. As such, He stands between us and God. Once Christ completed His earthly life, He yielded that life as a sacrifice for sin.

When our original parents sinned in the Garden of Eden, they became separated from God. Sin caused that. They were expelled from the Garden.

[12:07] Sin caused that. And ultimately, the Garden itself disappeared. Sin caused that. The only way back to fellowship with the Godhead was through a sacrifice.

Adam and Eve were now aware of their nakedness before God and hid. That's what people do when they realize they're sinners. They even sewed fig leaves together.

Try to make themselves presentable. I call that fig leaf religion. Religion is man's efforts to reach God. It always fails. And they failed. But Christ comes along and He killed an innocent animal and He made skin coverings for them.

That's a type of Christ. A symbolic picture of the sacrifice of Christ on Calvary. Now, we've already looked at some wondrous works of the Lord in our study.

I mean, it was marvelous that He created the universe by speaking it into existence. It is amazing that He sustains the universe. But the far greater work is His purging the sins of His people.

[13:24] I'm going to skip ahead to Hebrews 7. Verse 27. Trust me, we'll come back there. He has no need. It's Jesus.

He has no need like those high priests. That's the earthly high priests. To offer sacrifices daily. First for His own sins, then for those of the people.

Since He did this once for all when He offered up Himself. In the Old Testament, the priests had to make daily sacrifices for themselves, for their families, and for the people.

It went on constantly. The reason for this is the earthly high priest himself was a sinner. And He had to make animal sacrifice for Himself.

Next He had to sacrifice for His family and finally for the nation. But we're told that Jesus made only one sacrifice. He was not only the priest offering the sacrifice, He was also the sacrifice.

[14:35] See how that works? His sacrifice was perfect and it was pure. And the Old Testament sacrifices could never achieve this.

Hebrews 9, beginning in verse 11. But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent, not made with hands, that is not of this creation, He entered once for all into the holy places.

Not by means of the blood of goats and calves, but by means of His own blood. Thus securing, and listen to this, an eternal redemption.

Oh, we added a word to redemption. Eternal. For if the blood of goats and bulls and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer sanctify for the purification of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

That's Hebrews 9, verses 11-14. Elsewhere in the ninth chapter of Hebrews, we are told that Christ put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

[16:20] Put away sin. Once Christ put away sin through the sacrifice of Himself, something astonishing occurred. At the appropriate time, the Son ascended up into the highest heaven, took His rightful place next to God the Father.

And this fact leads us to the last excellency of Christ mentioned in the opening words of the book of Hebrews, His exaltation. After making purification for sins, He, that is Christ, listen to this, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

He made purification and He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. God the Father.

This was the rightful place for Christ Jesus.

It was the position He held for eternity past. And now He is exalted back to that position based upon His atoning work.

And note how specific the passage is, which you would expect, having been authored by the Holy Spirit, the Lord not only sat down, He sat down at the right hand of the Father.

[17:49] Very specific. You know who else does that in Gospels is Luke. Of course, he was a doctor. And he stretched out his right hand. The right hand is described as the side of power.

It is the position granted to a highly honored person. This sitting at the right hand is infinitely significant. In this position, the Lord Christ now has authority to rule over His worldwide kingdom on earth.

In that position, He is enthroned above all spiritual powers and heavenly places. The kingdom belongs to Christ.

It has been given to Him by the Father. And there's more. Therefore, therefore, God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name so that the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

There's something else in our passage in Hebrews that it's significant and it tells us that Christ sat down. When the earthly tabernacle and later the temple were constructed, there was no provision for seating.

[ 19 : 25 ] There were no chairs. Didn't put them in there. Why was that? The earthly high priest and his fellow priests never sat down in carrying out their priestly duties because their work of offering an atoning sacrifice of lambs and rams and turtle doves was never done.

It was continual. Henry Ford didn't create anything. The assembly line was back then. There was always another sin to atone for.

And that went on for 1,600 years, guys. It was every respect and the fish and the assembly line of killing animals for the sacrifice of sins.

Of course, these animals were only a picture of the true sacrifice, Christ Jesus. And as such, these animals could never totally take away sin. So here are the things we learn from Christ sitting down at the right hand of the Father.

First, Jesus sat down at the right hand of the Father because it is the seat of honor. And I can't think of a greater honor than to be at the right hand of the Trinity.

[ 20 : 40 ] Second, Jesus sat down as a sign of authority. He sat down as a ruler. 1 Peter 3.22 He has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to Him.

So we see there He sat down as a ruler. And third, He sat down to rest. Now that does not signify weariness. It signifies that what He came to accomplish was accomplished.

But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, He sat down at the right hand of God. and fourth, He sat down to intercede for us.

If you wake up at three in the morning like I do and you wonder what's Jesus doing right now? He's interceding for His beloved. Romans 8.34 Who is to condemn?

Christ Jesus is the one who died. More than that, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. when Christ offered this one sacrifice on the cross, He said, it is finished.

[ 21 : 58 ] That's what the word He uttered. Not in King James English. That is a Greek word, tetelestai. It was a banking term or a term in commerce, a commercial business.

It means the debt is paid in full. the debt's been paid. In context, it means that the sin debt we all owe to the Father has been completely satisfied by the atoning sacrifice of Christ.

If you are one with Christ. And if you're not, come see me or some of these guys. Because Christ could say in complete honesty that His work was finished.

It means that He alone is superior to all things in the universe. And dare I say, He's not coming back as a baby in a manger. That's done.

It means that He is superior to even angels, which is where we shall pick it up next time because angels carried a big significance to the Hebrew people.

[ 23 : 11 ] And that's where we will start next time, brothers. So let's close with a word of prayer.

Thank You, Lord, for Your grace and mercy and the peace we have with Jesus. Thank You, Lord, that You're sitting down to the right hand of the Father.

And thank You, Lord, that You ever live to make intercession for us. And I thank You in Your own name, Jesus. Amen.