

The Supremacy of Jesus in Hebrews 1-7

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Abstract - The superiority and uniqueness of Jesus Christ is described in detail in the letter to the Hebrews. Deep observation will uncover truths that will enrich faith. The very essence part is learning about the person of Jesus. Chapters 1 to 7, the writer of Hebrews discusses the superiority of Christ over persons who occupy important positions in human life. The facts of the superiority of Jesus are revealed in this section in great detail and depth. The following are the advantages of Jesus that must be understood so that they are not easily swayed by teachings that lessen the person of Jesus. First, Jesus is superior to the prophets. There are great prophets, there are last prophets but Jesus is superior to all of them. Second, Jesus is superior to the angels. There is nothing like Jesus Christ and the angels cannot compare to Him. Jesus is much higher and His name is much more beautiful. The Son of God is far more glorious than the angels. Third, Jesus is superior to Moses. The greatness of Moses is unquestionable. But the writer of Hebrews presents Jesus as “deserving greater glory than Moses.” Fourth, Jesus is superior to Aaron. Aaron was a highly respected high priest. The writer to the Hebrews introduces Jesus as the Great High Priest. In other words, Jesus is higher than Aaron.

Keywords: superior, beyond, perfect

I. INTRODUCTION

The book of Hebrews is full of doctrinal points about the superiority, privilege and uniqueness of Jesus Christ. In An Introduction of the New Testament, D.A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo note an early conclusion that: “The general theme of the Book of Hebrews – the absolute supremacy of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, the supremacy of allowing no other power to challenge, be it angelic or human.”[1] The writer of Hebrews puts forward this idea to encourage and ensure the

firmness of faith of the readers or recipients of the letter to Christ Jesus. Thus the early readers of this letter will no longer be swayed by winds of teaching that do not reflect the supremacy of Christ Jesus.

II. METHOD

In this discussion the author will use biblical studies to find facts about the personal advantages of Jesus. Observing the parts of God's Word that are directly related to the life of Christ. Literature studies will be taken to complete data about the person and work of Christ. The results of this research will be presented in practical writing and are expected to be learning materials for both theology students and the congregation.

III. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Based on the records of the writer to the Hebrews from chapter 1 to chapter 7, the supremacy of Jesus is presented clearly. The author will discuss these sections one by one, as follows:

Superior to the Prophets (1:1-3)

Beginning the letter, the author immediately confronts the readers/recipients of the letter about the glory of Jesus. The superiority of Jesus over the prophets is spoken of. The Israelites already understood the intricacies of prophets in the Old Testament. Prophets are followed, heard and respected, because of the prophet's role as mouthpiece, interpreter or mouthpiece of God. Every time God wanted to explain His will to the Israelites, a prophet was prepared for the task. Even Amos records it like this: “Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.” (Amos 3:7). The prophets exist as a means to reveal God's will to humans. An honorable position!

But in this passage the writer of Hebrews with consideration and certainly the encouragement (inspiration) of the Holy Spirit declares that the privilege and honor cannot match what God has done in Christ Jesus. This statement is not without argument. It can be read in full in Hebrews 1:1-3, thus:

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high

The identity of Jesus is revealed in such detail. Who's he? Who was then asked to be the Great High Priest who surpassed what was demonstrated by the High Priest Aaron.

First, the Son of God. There is so much recorded Bible data that attaches the title Son of God to Jesus. Jesus himself claimed that "...” (John 1:18). The question posed by Buist M. Fanning in *A Biblical Theology of New Testament* is an illuminating rhetorical question. Fanning said: “Who could better reveal the Father perfectly than the Son exuding His essence precisely?” [2] John concludes his Gospel by saying: “But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.” (John 20:31).

For the early Christians the term Son of God was used without hesitation. Mark 1:1; Acts 8:37 is considered a fragment of the confession of faith. Philip demanded the Ethiopian eunuch confess that Jesus was the Son of God before he was baptized. This term is what caused Jesus to be opposed and wanted to be killed. For the Jews the Son of God was equal to God. John 5:17-18 - He was about to be killed for speaking of God his Father. It was considered blasphemy, because He called Himself the Son of God. Thus He identified Himself with God (John 19:7). The letters in the New Testament prove that the title Jesus the Son of God is important and fundamental. Jesus was established as the Son of God in His Power (Rom. 1:3-4); Mature Christian faith is knowing that Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus called God over and over as His Father. There is a special relationship between Jesus and God as the Son of God. In the event of Jesus' baptism, a voice was heard from heaven, thus: " And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. " (Matt. 3:16-17).

Second, the heirs, have the right to receive everything that exists. Jesus claimed ownership by saying: “All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.” (John 16:15). The Father loves the Son and has given all things to Him (John 3:35). Jesus knew that His Father had given all things to Him and that He had come from God and returned to God (John 13:3). Jesus said: “All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.” (Matt. 11:27). Seconds to be lifted up to heaven, Jesus said: " And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." (Matt. 28:18).

Third, the Creator. By Him God has made the universe. There is no doubt that Jesus played a part in the creation process. This statement is in line with John 1:3, which reads: “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.” Continued in verse 10, " He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not."

Fourth, the invisible God (the light of God's glory and the image of God's being). Long before the prophet Isaiah had revealed the identity of His Majesty: “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” (Isa. 9:6). This term is also used in Zechariah 9:10; Colossians 1:20; Ephesians 2:14. This implies that the coming Messiah will be the Prince of Peace. Exactly what Paul said in Colossians 1:15, He is the image of the invisible God; all the fullness of God delights to dwell in him (Colossians 1:19). When Philip, one of the disciples begged Jesus to show them the person of the Father, Jesus said to him: " Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?" (John 14:9). Colossians 2:9 emphasizes that in Him (in Jesus) dwells physically all the fullness of the Godhead.

Fifth, the Sustainer of all that is, sustains all that is by His powerful word (verse 3). When a number of people were disturbed by Jesus' teaching and left the place, Jesus said to the disciples, "Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. " (John 6:68-69). And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? (Matt. 13:54) A centurion

in Capernaum begged Jesus to heal his servant who was paralyzed and in great pain, even near death. After Jesus declared his willingness to come to heal, this centurion said: "And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed." (Matt. 8:5-8). Just say a word! People's admiration for the power of Jesus' words was expressed even more, despite the fact that the Jewish religious leaders were really disturbed. And everyone was amazed, and said to one another, saying, " And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out." (Luke 4:36). The qualities of God are perfectly in Jesus. For He spoke, and everything was done; He commanded, and everything exists (Ps. 4:36).

Sixth, the Purification of sins, and when He had finished performing the cleansing of sins, He sat at the right hand of the Most High, on high (verse 3). In the Old Testament, the Israelites knew exactly the gravity of the ritual of redemption. A ransom with an animal sacrifice which is measured, analyzed or determined by a priest appointed for it. The author presents the work of Jesus as "washed away from sin" once and for all. With the position "sitting at the right hand of the Most Great," signifies that the ritual is complete. The one sentence Jesus said on the cross just before He gave His life: "It is finished," is a confirmation that His incarnate mission is complete. Jesus himself made a bold statement: "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." (John 17:4). The mission to complete the work that the Father has given is the priority, and the only one!

It is only in the first three verses of the Hebrews that the superiority of Jesus is explained in detail. Leon Morris' notes in *New Testament Theology* provides a brief summary of this. Morris said: "This letter begins with a long talk about the person of Christ. The author explains that Jesus was a very admirable man, who was much higher than all creation and had to be on the equal footing with God." [3]

Superior to the Angels (1:4 - 2:8)

The description of Jesus included in the first pericope of this letter is followed by the expression that Jesus is more important than the angels. In Hebrews 1:4 it says: " Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they." This phrase is a sign that in fact between the two, Jesus Christ and the angels there is nothing that can be compared or equated. Jesus is much higher and His name is much more beautiful. The writer of Hebrews asserts, referring to his desires: "] Though he were

a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered" (5:8). Furthermore, His title was centuries before the incarnation, a clear implication of the statement in Hebrews 1:2 that God has spoken to man in his "Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds" [4] As the Son of God, his closeness to the Father distinguished him from the angels, placing him far above them, and his temporary contempt under the angels was so that, as the Son, He could establish His closeness to His brethren.

This is the main point of this passage, that in the world to come, the Son of God is far more exalted than the angels. This is evidenced by several quotations from the Psalms (and from 2 Sam. 7:14). First, He inherited the name "Son" (1:5). Apparently His much more beautiful name that was passed down to Him was "Son" as described in chapter 1:5 and also in Psalm 2:7. Psalm 2 tells of the time when the Messiah/King will begin to reign as King. Second, the rights of the Son of God (1:6-14). The glory of the Son of God is described by quoting several passages from the Book of Psalms where the rights and positions of the Son of God are compared with the rights and positions of angels. Several things are shown as the superiority of Christ over angels, including: first, angels serve, but Jesus, the Son of God is served; second, angels are associated with creation, but Jesus, the Son of God created. Third, angels can change (become rebellious), Jesus, the Son of God does not change. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever (Hebrews 13:8).

The writer to Hebrews begins chapter 2 with the words: Therefore, we must pay more attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. (Hebrews 2:1). The phrase "therefore" refers to the above truth, namely: First, because Jesus is superior to all prophets and angels and the new revelation is superior to the old revelation; second, because God spoke through His Son and the Son was superior to the angels and prophets of the Old Testament.[5] The culmination of the two truths above is that Jesus is superior to the angels and prophets, a warning appears so that the recipient of the letter is more selective in paying attention to what is heard.

Superior to Moses (3:1 – 4:13)

The discussion of Jesus' superiority over Moses is accompanied by a number of arguments. The following is the writer's note to the "saints, who share in the heavenly calling" thus:

And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. (Ibr. 3:5-6).

In the eyes of the Israelites, Moses was the central figure. This figure is credited with freeing them from Egyptian bondage and leading them along a journey in the desert to the land that God promised Israel through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The greatness of Moses is unquestionable and unquestionable. But the writer of Hebrews presents Jesus as “deserving greater glory than Moses.” The author describes the superiority of Jesus over Moses, as follows:

First, Moses was faithful in all His house; Jesus was faithful to the One who ordained Him. Both are loyal, but loyal to what or who makes the difference. Moses' loyalty to God was tarnished, until he himself was not allowed by God to enter the land of Canaan. Compared to Jesus who is “the faithful and true witness” (Rev. 1:5; 3:14).

Second, Moses was faithful as a servant in the house of God; Jesus is the head over that house (the ransom). It is as if Moses was the servant of the house, Jesus the host; servant versus master. Although the image of Moses as a servant in the house of God is quite prestigious and honorable and dignified, it is not on the same level as Jesus who is the head of the house of God. To be appointed as a servant of Allah is an honor and a special calling. Of course this special treatment does not only apply to Moses, but also to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who were specially called by God Himself. In this case Jesus is far from the pride, because He is the host.

Third, Moses testified; Jesus is the object of witness. Moses told the Israelites that God would raise up a prophet after God's own heart (Deut. 18:15, 18). Jesus said to the healed: "And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee." (John 9:37).

Fourth, Moses' ministry was a foreshadowing of what Jesus actually did in heaven. In the transfiguration event (Matt. 17), the appearance of Moses and Elijah is a sign of their character. But the vision soon faded. There are four words that denote the Tabernacle in Israel and only one object to teach the true Tabernacle: first, “a description of what is in heaven (8:5); second, the “shadow” of the things in heaven” (8:5); third, “the true tabernacle pattern” (8:5); and fourth “an allusion to the present” (9:9). The difference is between shadow and reality. The tabernacle on earth is an illustration of God's work of salvation which culminates in the body or Tabernacle of the Lord Jesus Christ, the true Tabernacle "not made by man."

Superior to Aaron (4:14 – 7:28)

The Old Testament introduces important positions in Israel's history: prophet, priest and king. In relation to full worship the priest takes the main role. The priest was an ordinary man like the people he represented, and more than that he was a sinner, so he had to offer sacrifices for both his own sins and the sins of others.

The writer to the Hebrews introduces Jesus as the Great High Priest. Only in this book is there a detailed description of the priesthood of Jesus, in other words there is no other book in the New Testament that emphasizes Jesus as the High Priest. The Scriptures' statements about Christ's work as High Priest are one of the most important aspects of His work today. Actually His priesthood is something more than a mere image or symbol of truth, for Christ is a Priest in a more tangible sense than a vine or a shepherd.

In all this it is clear that the priesthood of Christ is valid and that Christ fulfills the full ministry of a priest. Only in the sacrificial work of Jesus Christ can the sacrifice on the Day of Atonement in Leviticus chapter 16 be fulfilled. Only His sacrifice can take away sin. The superiority of Jesus over Aaron can be seen from:

First, the scope of Jesus' influence. The Great High Priest includes all nations, all tribes, peoples and languages. Compared to the high priest Aaron who deals limitedly with the context of one nation, Israel. Second, the High Priest Aaron brought the blood of animals, Jesus, the Great High Priest brought His own blood. Third, the High Priest Aaron in addition to bringing atonement for the sins of the people, he must first bring an atoning sacrifice for himself; Jesus the Great High Priest brought pure sacrifices to reconcile the people with God. Because He is sinless. With this idea the writer to the Hebrews shows Jesus as the only High Priest who offered a sacrifice that could open the way to God, and that that sacrifice was himself.[6] Donald Guthrie says: But not only is the location of the offerings different, the offerings themselves are also different. The high priest, in an unprecedented manner, offered himself. The work of the High Priest Christ is truly unique. In Hebrews 9:14 he asserts that Christ's offering was through the eternal Spirit, which marks it as incomparable when placed with the shedding of the blood of poor beasts. He also showed that the blood of Christ could cleanse the conscience, which the Levite sacrifice could not do.[7] Fourth, High Priest Aaron performed this ritual once a year; Jesus the Great High Priest only needed once and for all. “For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.” (Hebrews 7:26-27). This is possible given that Jesus' sacrifice was perfect, without blemish, without blemish, without blemish. Fifth, High Priest Aaron was temporal; but Jesus the Great High Priest is eternal. Christ is also appointed as the permanent High Priest, who has become the atoning sacrifice for sin (2:17). Sixth, the high priest Aaron brought offerings as an annual ritual and tended to be a duty to bring the problems of the people to God; Jesus, the Great High Priest was not only an outward ritual, but He also felt it. Jesus, as the Great High

Priest, truly has the power to meet every need, spiritual or material, of every believer in every age and every moment. Jesus experienced trials in every area of His life, but never gave in to sin. His temptations do not come from a sinful nature. However, He experienced trials more powerfully and thoroughly than any human has ever experienced because He was sinless.[8] He never had a personal sin. Therefore, He could be the representative for sin and die in the place of and pay the debt of human sin. Because He was human, He could sympathize with the weaknesses of His people. He is the all-understanding High Priest. Just as every Jewish high priest was human and could relate to people, Jesus was human and could relate to people. Jesus was raised because He was a perfect human being. The humanity of Jesus was not a limitation for Him as High Priest, but a capital that allowed Him to empathize with humanity. In fact, believers in heaven have a high priest with an incomparable capacity to empathize with them in all their weaknesses, especially those that result in sin. Seventh, the office of High Priest Aaron can be continued by another person who is qualified for it. For example, after Aaron died, the position was entrusted to Eliezer by God's command. Jesus, the Great High Priest does not know succession, because it is eternal. However, because He remains forever, His priesthood cannot be transferred to another person (Hebrews 7:24). And no one takes this honor for himself, but is called to it by God, as was the case with Aaron (Hebrews 5:4). Eighth, High Priest Aaron had blemish and blemish; Jesus, the High Priest is perfect. With that perfection (without spot and blemish), He is also able to save perfectly all those who come to God through Him (Hebrews 7:25). "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

IV. CONCLUSION

By studying the Letter to the Hebrews, the reader will discover spiritual riches that cannot be compared with any other riches. One of the interesting parts to ponder is about the person of Jesus who is superior to other persons, who has a high position in the eyes of ordinary people. The results of the research in the Hebrews, specifically chapters 1 to 7 regarding the personal superiority of Jesus, can be summarized as follows:

First, Jesus is superior to prophets. Even though prophets have an important role in people's lives, Jesus is superior to prophets. Second, Jesus is superior to angels. The Bible records that angels have extraordinary strength and power, but Jesus weakened all of these powers. Third, Jesus is superior to Moses. Moses was an important figure in the liberation of Israel's slavery, but Moses was no bigger than the person of Jesus. Fourth, Jesus is superior to Aaron. Aaron was the first priest appointed by God, and even sent down all the

descendants of faith. But the high priest Aaron needed Jesus, the Great High Priest, because Aaron could not solve his own sin.

Research Contribution: after completing this research, the writer realized that there are many parts of God's word in this Hebrew book that need to be studied more deeply, because there are many truths that have not been revealed. One part that really wants to be developed is the part of Jesus' priestly ministry which is rarely discussed either in theology classes or in studying God's word in the church.

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