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W. O. Vaught

Ouachita Baptist University

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THE DOCTRINE OF --- CHRIST'S ASCENSION,
HIS HYPOSTATIC UNION AND HIS PRIESTHOOD

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF HEBREWS
NUMBER 26
HEBREWS 4:14

W. O. Vaught
Immanuel Baptist Church
Little Rock, Arkansas

HEBREWS 4:14 "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession."

Jesus Christ is our High Priest as well as our Saviour. He will not only rule the entire earth but is the source of everything we have or will ever have. The moment we believed in Christ we were born again, but we had to start as spiritual babies. Our capacity to love Christ will be demonstrated by the amount of Bible Doctrine we learn and store in our human spirits. It is when we move into super grace that we really begin to love Jesus Christ. Occupation with Christ leads us to spiritual maturity. Super grace capacity leads to super grace blessing God pours when we have a cup.

VERSE 14 "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. The word "seeing" comes from the particle "oun" and is a conjunction which shows we have arrived at a conclusion. We have been studying reversionism all through the first three chapters, and now here at the close of this fourth chapter, we have come to a conclusion. Here we are going to see the celebrity-ship of Jesus Christ. In a real way, this verse is the transition verse of the whole Book of Hebrews. The purpose of Hebrews is to bring every believer into occupation with Jesus Christ. For the first time the word "priest" is mentioned and every believer in the Church Age is a priest. So we might say these words "seeing then" can be correctly translated "What is our conclusion then" on the basis of what has gone on before in this book.

The Cross--The Turning Point

Satan did everything he could to keep Christ from going to the cross. The cross is the beginning of our victory. The cross broke the back of Satan. When Christ was crucified, arose and ascended the strategical victory of the Angelic Conflict was accomplished. The cross broke the back of Satan, says Colossians 2:14. The ascension proves that Christ as a human being is higher than any angelic being, and makes it possible for him to return to the earth and rule for 1,000 years. At that point Satan and all unbelievers will be removed. In the meantime, we have an interruption of The Jewish Age and we have the dispensation we call the Church Age. This is the age of the tactical victory. Every time during the Church Age a believer reaches super grace, he makes it possible for God to pour out his blessings and in this act God is glorified. Next in this 14th verse we have the words "That we have" and this is a present, active, participle of "echo" and it is a dramatic present, and it means to have and to hold. We keep on having this glorious relationship. Then we have the words "megas" meaning "great" and "arche ereus" meaning "high priest." Then it says, "That is passed unto" and this is a perfect, active, participle of "dierchomai." The moment this happened, the Angelic Conflict was won. Our high priest sits in heaven as a victor. The cross was the strategic victory, and the ascension clinched it and being seated at God's right hand sealed that victory for all time. This therefore presents Christ to the world as the ONLY CELEBRITY. CHRIST IS THE UNIQUE FIGURE OF THE UNIVERSE. The victory of Christ is not in question. His victory is already a reality.

Next we have the words "through the heavens" and that leads us to look at the doctrine of the Ascension.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE ASCENSION

1. IN HIS RESURRECTION BODY CHRIST EXPERIENCED SPACE TRAVEL.
He traveled through three heavens according to John 20:17. He went millions of light years away and sat down at the right hand of God.
2. ONCE CHRIST ARRIVED IN HEAVEN GOD THE FATHER SAID "SIT DOWN!"
We read this in Psalm 110:1, Romans 8:34, Col. 3:1, Eph. 2:20, Hebrews 1:3 and 13; 10:12; 12:2 and 1 Peter 3:22. This truth is documented again and again in Scripture. This is the climax of the triumph of Christ. Christ didn't stop half way. He went all the way to the throne of God and this means that one day we will do the same. His humanity was accepted and this means our humanity will be accepted.
3. HIS ASCENSION MARKED THE ANGELIC CONFLICT VICTORY.
Satan rebelled and when God sentenced him to the lake of fire, he complained that God was not fair. God proved that he was fair and man was brought on the scene to resolve this conflict. This is the message of Hebrews 1.
4. CHRIST'S ASCENSION AND SESSION BEGAN A NEW PHASE OF THE ANGELIC CONFLICT.
We are now the target of Satan instead of Christ. Ephesians 1:20-22; 4:7-10. This is the way God grows us into super grace believers. This is the way God vindicates his Word. So we live in the midst of the greatest conflict that ever existed.
5. THE ASCENSION AND SESSION OF CHRIST WAS THE BEGINNING OF OPERATION FOOTSTOOL. Psalm 110:1; Luke 20:42-43; Acts 2:33-34
Operation footstool recognizes the final victory of Jesus Christ to be culminated with his Second Advent. At that time all the unbelieving angels and Satan will be removed. They were left here all during the Church Age so there could be a real contest for man. Man could never develop unless there was a conflict.
6. THE SECOND ADVENT WILL CONCLUDE OPERATION FOOTSTOOL.
Daniel 7:13-14; Zechariah 13:2; Col. 2:15; Rev. 20:1-3.
When Christ returns he will return with the Church to The Battle of Armageddon and he will personally destroy the enemy. It will be the greatest destruction of all time. (once before he slaughtered 185,000 Assyrians when they tried to destroy Jerusalem.)
7. THE ASCENSION AND SESSION OF CHRIST COMPLETES THE GLORY OF CHRIST IN HIS HYPOSTATIC UNION.
Acts 2:33; Acts 5:31; Phil. 2:9; 1 Peter 3:22
8. THE ASCENSION AND SESSION OF CHRIST EXPLAINS THE UNIQUENESS OF JESUS CHRIST. John 7:37-39
9. THE ASCENSION AND SESSION OF JESUS CHRIST IS THE KEY TO THE VICTORY IN THE ANGELIC CONFLICT. Hebrews 1:4

Next in this verse we have an expression which explains who this one was who ascended. It says, "Jesus, the Son of God." And this Son of God is our High Priest. Now a priest is a man who represents men before God. This High Priest who wins the victory is called "The Son of God." "Son of God" refers to his Deity, his essence. He is co-equal with God and co-equal to The Holy Spirit. But he is a man also, and has a soul minus the old sin nature and also has a human spirit. But as God he couldn't die. He can't change his characteristics and therefore he couldn't die as God. In order to die he had to be a man. So Jesus Christ became a man, took our place on the cross and became sin for us. So in this act he became the unique figure of the universe. He is different from God in that he is man. He is different man in that he is God. He was perfect man and perfect God in one person forever. No matter how you look at Christ, he is unique. He is in a league by himself and he is our great High Priest.

THE DOCTRINE OF JESUS THE SON OF GOD

This is the uniqueness of the person of Jesus Christ.

1. DEFINITION OF HYPOSTATIC UNION--IN THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST THERE ARE TWO NATURES INSEPARABLY UNITED WITHOUT MIXTURE OR LOSS OF SEPARATE IDENTITY. Neither is there the loss of separate attributes, or diminishing of separate attributes. This union of human and deity is personal and eternal.
2. THE HYPOSTATIC UNION IS VERIFIED IN SCRIPTURE.
John 1:1-14, Romans 1:2-5; Romans 9:5; Phil. 2:5-11; 1 Tim. 3:16
Hebrews 2:14
3. THE INCARNATE PERSON OF CHRIST INCLUDES HIS DEITY, CO-EQUAL WITH GOD AND THE HOLY SPIRIT, CO-ETERNAL. The incarnation does not diminish his deity. He is therefore undiminished deity.
4. THE INCARNATE PERSON OF CHRIST IS TRUE HUMANITY.
He has a body, a soul, and a spirit. But his soul is minus the old sin nature. Through the Virgin Birth Jesus avoided the imputation of Adam's sins and he was not born spiritually dead, as we are. So Jesus came into the world without an old sin nature. He never once went negative in his free will, not even once.
5. CHRIST'S TWO NATURES ARE UNITED WITHOUT TRANSFER OF ATTRIBUTES.
In other words, the attributes adhered to their corresponding natures. The attributes of his deity were not altered or lowered when he became a man. To rob Jesus of one quality of his deity would destroy him as God. To rob him of one part of his humanity would destroy his humanity and his hypostatic union.
6. NO ATTRIBUTE OF HIS DEITY WAS CHANGED BY HIS INCARNATION.
In the fulfillment of his first advent certain attributes of his deity were used. But this does not mean they were surrendered or destroyed. Some believe that when he became humanity some of the items of his deity were surrendered. This is not true.

He didn't mix his deity with his humanity. Quite often Jesus restricted the power of his deity. The humanity of Jesus recognized the authority of the Father always. All through his life there was authority, authority, authority. This is the very foundation of the celebrity-ship of Jesus Christ. Christ voluntarily restricted his attributes. We see this in the temptations. The Devil tempted Christ to turn stone into bread, and he could have done it, but he didn't. That would have been violating God's plan for him. God was going to care for him and he did. The Devil offered Christ the kingdoms of this world and it was a bona fide offer. But Christ refused. The only kingdom Christ will ever have is the one he is going to win, not the one the Devil offered to give him.

7. THIS UNION OF DIVINE ESSENCE AND HUMAN NATURE MUST BE CONSIDERED AS HYPOSTATIC AND PERSONAL.
He is true deity and true humanity in one person forever. He is the symbol of our eternal victory. He is the God-man, only Saviour.
8. HIS DEITY DOES NOT POSSESS HIS HUMANITY.
His deity did not possess his humanity, neither did his deity indwell his humanity. There was harmony and sympathy, but both are separate.
9. THEREFORE JESUS AS THE GOD-MAN HAS ONE ESSENCE FOREVER.
His divine attributes and his human nature will belong to him forever. These never mix and never change. He was weak and strong at the same time. He was ignorant and omniscient at the same time. Luke 2:40; Luke 2:52; John 1:14
10. FOUR REASONS WHY HE HAD TO BECOME HUMAN.
 - a. Christ had to become a member of the human race in order to be our Saviour. Phil. 2:7-8; Heb. 2:14-15. As God he is sovereign and sovereignty can't die. He is omnipresent, and you can't compress omnipresence into one spot on a cross. He is immutable and can't change.
 - b. Jesus Christ is the Mediator.
The mediator must be equal with both parties in the mediation. If he brings God and man together, he must be equal with both and he is. Job 9:32-33; 1 Timothy 2:5 and 6.
 - c. He had to become a man in order to be a priest.
A priest is a man who represents other men to God. Hebrews 7:4-5-14-28. Hebrews 10:5 through 14.
 - d. God promised David a son would sit on his throne forever.
This is 2 Samuel 7:8-16 and Psalm 89:20-37.
He had to be a man and descend from David. This he did through Solomon on the legal side down through Joseph. Then he descended in blood line through Nathan and that was Mary's line.
11. EVERYTHING SAID BY CHRIST WHILE HE WAS ON EARTH ORIGINATED FROM ONE OF THREE SOURCES.
 - a. From his deity. John 8:58
 - b. From his humanity. John 19:28
 - c. From his hypostatic union. Matthew 11:23; John 14:6

This is what is meant by "Jesus, The Son of God."

THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST'S BEING HIGH PRIEST

1. THERE ARE THREE DIFFERENT PRIESTHOODS IN SCRIPTURE.
 - a. In the age of the Gentiles, they had bona fide priests.
The father was the priest and then the oldest son became the priest.
 - b. In Israel they had the Levitical priesthood.
The priests came from the Tribe of Levi, from the family of Aaron. Reuben was the firstborn and in this office he was the ruler, the priest and the heir. But he lost the rulership to Judah, he lost the priesthood to Levi, and he lost the double portion to Joseph.
 - c. In the Age of the Church. In this age every believer is a priest. In this age each priest goes to God direct for himself. 1 Peter 2:5 and 1 Peter 2:9.

2. AS HIGH PRIEST JESUS MINISTERED SPIRITUAL THINGS
Hebrews 5:1

3. CHRIST WAS APPOINTED HIGH PRIEST BY GOD THE FATHER.
Hebrews 5:4-10 Hebrews 6:20

4. CHRIST OFFERED HIMSELF AS A SACRIFICE FOR THE PRIESTHOOD.
Hebrews 9:26 and 27.
His first problem was to solve the problem of the old sin nature. Then he was also to reject all human good.

5. CHRIST IS THE ETERNAL PRIEST.
He will never change and will never surrender this place to another. Hebrews 7:20 and 21 and 24.

6. BECAUSE OF POSITIONAL SANCTIFICATION EVERY BELIEVER IS TO FUNCTION AS A PRIEST.
1 Peter 2:5 and 6; Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6.

7. AS HIGH PRIEST CHRIST PERFORMS A MINISTRY OF INTERCESSION.
He intercedes for us down here on the earth. Heb. 7:25

8. IN THE CHURCH AGE THE BELIEVER OFFERS UP SACRIFICES.
 - a. The sacrifice of his own body.
 - b. Being in full-time Christian service. Romans 12:1
 - c. The sacrifice of praise. Heb. 13:15
 - d. The sacrifice of the production of divine good. Heb. 13:16
 - e. Obedience to the local church. Hebrews 13:17