

# Son of the Right Hand

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(Extracted from Scripture Truth Vol. 46, 1977-9, pages 225-30.)

Genesis 35: 16-20 Hebrews 1: 3 and 13

Exodus 15: 6 Hebrews 8: 1 and 2

Psalm 80: 17 Hebrews 10.11-14

Psalm 110: 1 Hebrews 12.1 and 2

The four readings from the Hebrew Epistle are to be our theme, and I draw attention to the Old Testament scriptures as an introduction to it.

## The Right Hand

This touching incident appeals to the heart and stirs the deepest feelings. A mother is travailing in birth, and the midwife is saying it is going to be another son, and "you will have this son also". But she died in giving birth to that son, although she lived long enough to see him, and to name him. She named him in relation to the condition in which she was, calling him Benoni, the son of my sorrow. Rachel had a very prominent place in the divine line. Jacob had his place, a key place, so to speak, in the ways of God, for God is the God of Abraham, and Isaac and of Jacob; and Rachel was absolutely essential in the ordering of God for the accomplishment of His designs. She named her son Benoni, as though, looking with the eye of faith down the passage of history, she saw that blessed Person of whom Isaiah wrote, "Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief". Jacob, when he renames his son, looks down the page of history with the eye of faith and he also takes account (I say this suggestively) of the Christ of God, not in relation to all that failing, sinful man could heap upon him, but in the light of the purpose and the calling of God. She said, Benoni, son of my sorrow. Jacob says, "that will never do, his name is Benjamin, the son of the right hand". So very early, you see, on the page of divine history, these two things are stamped by divine impression: the path of the suffering of the Christ of God, and the path of triumph and glory that was bound to ensue.

Exodus 15: 6, lifted in a sense out of its setting, gives some idea of what is connected with the thought of the right hand. "Thy right hand . . . is become glorious in power"; glorious power is connected with the right hand of God. The hand that has become glorious in power will establish the will of God and put down, as it did then historically in regard to Pharaoh and his host, every opposing element. When the will of God is established and every evil suppressed, the righteous government of

God will be established in the Son of the right hand.

Psalm 80: 17, "Let thy hand be on the man of thy right hand". God's hand is laid upon him. Psalm 89: 19 says, "I have laid help upon one that is mighty". The Mighty one of Psalm 89 is the Man of the right hand in Psalm 80. God has a Man upon whom He can lay His hand, and if He lays His hand upon Him, it means that He is committing everything for His own glory to Him. There is no doubt who that Man is. "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand" (John 3: 35). There is One before Him upon whom He can lay His hand, and in doing so bestows upon Him everything to God's glory. His hand is upon the Man of His right hand, upon the Son of Man whom He made strong for Himself.

Psalm 110 starts without preliminaries, "the LORD said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool". The name LORD in capitals in the A.V. signifies God's personal name, Jehovah, and "my Lord" has the meaning, my Master. There are thus two Persons. The God of Israel addressed the Messianic King "Sit thou at my right hand".

Obviously at the time of address He was not at the right hand. The Psalm is prophetic. Our Lord Jesus tells of this in Matthew 22. The shepherds of Israel, self appointed, all made an assault against the Son of God. The Herodians were the political faction in Israel; the Sadducees, the rationalists, the Pharisees ritualists. Politicians, rationalists ritualists, all join together, an "ecumenical" movement against the concentrated truth of God presented in the person of the Son of God. They were asking Him questions with the intention of ensnaring Him; but He could not be ensnared, and He asked them a question: "What think ye of Christ, whose son is he?" That put them on the horns of a dilemma. They said, "David's son". He replies, "How then does David in spirit call him Lord (Psalm 110: 1) saying, the LORD said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool?" After that, "neither durst any man . . . ask him any more questions". Our Lord gives us warrant to see that Psalm 110 applies exclusively to Himself. It gives us witness to the glory of that blessed Person who was traduced here by men. They dishonoured Him, they brought Him down, they treated Him ignominiously. The Psalmist, speaking by the Spirit of Christ, honoured Him, glorified Him; but beyond what the prophetic Spirit had to say in the rest of Psalm 110, this part of the Psalm has already been fulfilled. "Sit thou at my right hand"; that is where He is today; "until I make thy foes thy footstool". We are living in the "until". Our lot is cast in that word in Psalm 110, "until". "Sit thou" does not mean cessation of activity for Him; it means exaltation, glory and honour for Him. Hebrews 2 tells us, "We see not yet all things put under him", but there is something we do see, "we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels on account of the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour". That is where and how He is today, and we have a link with Him in the period covered by the word, "until".

Our Lord occupies a waiting position today, and if this waiting is nearing completion, and the glory of the coming kingdom that belongs to the Benjamin, the Man of the right hand, nearing apace, how much nearer is the end of the "until" insofar as we (believers in the Lord Jesus Christ today) are concerned. In other words, how much nearer must the Rapture be, that blessed moment when He is going to descend into the air, and to give a rallying shout. Then every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is going to leave this world, to join Him in view of coming with Him in the glory of the Kingdom. He is coming for us in order that He might bring us with Him. Thank God we know Him now in the "until" period, know Him as Hebrews depicts Him in the verses which will now be our theme.

In approaching these four passages from Hebrews I feel so inadequate in speaking about Him. He is so great, so glorious that He is beyond human explanation. It does not matter how much we learn of

Him, He is always ahead of us. The great apostle of the Gentiles was always saying that there is something about Him that he was still reaching for; "that I may know Him". This was the great ambition of his affection and life.

## **He is There in virtue of His Person**

The context of Hebrews 1: 3, "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high". One of the facets of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ the Son, is that He has by Himself made purification for sins. Do you say that forgiveness of sins is elementary? Do you know that it took such a Person as this to effect it? The fifth chapter of Revelation tells me that in the glory they are going to sing a new song, and the burden of the new song is, "Thou wast slain and hast redeemed to God by Thine own blood". Surely that covers the forgiveness of sins. He is the one and He is the only one who could, and who has, dealt with our sins. Having made by Himself the purification for sins, [He] set Himself down on the right hand of the greatness on high. He is there today because of who He is, and every part of these verses sets forth His greatness and glory. One of the facets of His greatness and glory is that He has, by Himself, made purification for sins.

## **He is There in Virtue of His Preeminence**

I simply say with regard to Him at the right hand (verse 13), He is there pre-eminent in relation to the myriads of angels. Revelation 5 also tells us there is an innumerable company of angels, and He takes precedence over them all, because of who He is, and because of where He is, at the right hand. "To which of the angels said he at any time, sit on my right hand"? There is only one archangel named in scripture, Michael, but even Michael is not at the right hand; Michael is at the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ. Gabriel, now called an archangel, is at the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ; they are all there, and, what is more, the devil is going to be there. He is going to bow the knee to Jesus and to own that Jesus Christ is Lord. "Wherefore God hath highly exalted him (that is, He is at the right hand), and given him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of heavenly beings, earthly beings and infernal beings", and that takes it down into the nether regions where the devil will be. And when the infernal beings hear that blessed name of Jesus sounded out, they are all going to bow the knee, and the devil will be the first to say, "He is Lord", not willingly, but by power. Our Lord Jesus Christ is positionally pre-eminent above the angelic hosts because they are only ministering spirits, and He is the Lord of all (1: 13, 14).

## **He is There in Virtue of His Priesthood**

In Hebrews 8: 1, He is there in virtue of His office, superseding the priesthood of Aaron. "We have such an high priest who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." There is a wealth of meaning behind the word "such". Our Lord Jesus Christ is set down as priest at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. You will notice here it says the right hand of the throne; it is an official position. Hebrews speaks of the throne, not quite so much on the line of government, but as the throne of grace (4: 16). The administration of all the divine support, succour and sympathy that the saints of God need, is embodied at the foot of the throne; and the One who sits there in the administration of it is none other than that blessed Man who has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. "He knows what sorest trials mean, for He has felt the same." He has been through it all and is qualified to act as our priest in the presence of God. But the kind of ministering that I am referring to

— succour, support, sympathy and salvation — belongs to Him at the right hand of God to minister to us here where the pressures are, so as to relieve our spirits of the downward pull of it all, that we might be free to join Him as the minister of the sanctuary, giving to Him that which He will offer Godward.

## He is There in Virtue of His Sacrifice

Chapter 10: 12. He is there on the ground of redemption. He is there in virtue of His sacrifice. Our passage commences: "every priest standeth". In the Old Testament order of things every priest stands, and never sits down. He never sat down, because his work of sacrifice was never done. He was daily ministering and offering, oftentimes the same sacrifices, bulls and goats — we read of it in the book of Leviticus — which can never, never, take away sins. There is a difference of only one letter between the exercise of the Aaronic priest and such an high priest as ours. It is the difference between 'never' and 'ever'. He sits forever because the work that he does is done for ever. Thus, ineffectiveness was written over the Old Testament priestly order. How utterly misguided has been the organised priestly order extending over the whole history of Christianity, in imitation of what God has set aside!

Thank God the Lord Jesus Christ, unlike those priests, is brought in here in verse 12, "But this man". Take notice of the 'buts' of scripture; they emphasise contrast. "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down." Note the correction from "one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down" to "one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down"; that is, He sat down in perpetuity. He sat down everlastingly because His work is everlastingly done. After a work so gloriously completed, "He . . . for ever sat down on the right hand of God". When I say, He is there in virtue of His sacrifice, I do not mean that He is there sacrificing. That was done on the cross for ever and the greatness and perfection of His work is here in verse 12. In verse 14 we learn that the results are as good as the work and His saints **are as** clear from sins and iniquities as the One who has done the work. We read here, "by one offering he hath perfected, [the same language as before] in perpetuity them that are sanctified". Christ is at the right hand in all the glory of redemption's work, and we know Him there, on the basis of what He has done at the Cross.

## He is There in Virtue of His Moral Perfection

Let us recall the verses in full, for every phrase is significant. "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

The witnesses are not spectators looking at the saints running the race. They are witnesses to all that faith can do. It has often been said: faith believes the incredible, sees the invisible, and does the impossible, and this could be written over chapter eleven.

In view of the cloud of witnesses, what are we to do? Scripture answers: "Let us lay aside every weight and sin which doth so easily beset us". The words, 'besetting sin' are often misused. It is not in this passage some particular sin, but sin, which easily besets or entangles us, like a piece of rope on the track getting between a runner's feet and tripping him up.

"Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking off unto Jesus." What are we going to look off from? Let us look off from the witnesses, look off from our brethren, look off everything else, but look unto Him!

"Looking off unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith." This means that He was the One who began and completed the whole course of faith. He has gone the whole way.

"Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame." Just think of Him as the Man of Sorrows, acquainted with grief, yet joy was set before Him. It does not say He despised the cross, but He despised the shame, that is, he despised what men did to Him. The cross was different for it involved His being made sin, which established the glory of God. He despised the shame of what puny man heaped upon Him.

What is the result? He is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. He is there because of His moral perfection and beauty. Thank God for the true Benjamin, Son of the right hand. May God give us grace to run with endurance, looking off unto Jesus.