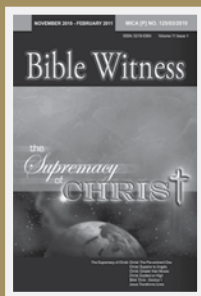


Bible Witness

the
Supremacy
of
CHRIST†

The Supremacy of Christ: Christ: The Pre-eminent One
Christ: Superior to Angels
Christ: Greater than Moses
Christ: Exalted on High
Bible Trivia - Exodus 1
Jesus Transforms Lives



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*All articles are written by the editor,
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EDITORIAL

prabhudas koshy

Jesus once asked His disciples, “Whom do men say that I am?” (Mark 8:27). Then, He put the question to the disciples themselves, “But whom say ye that I am?” (Mark 8:29). Thus, Christ turned their thoughts from what others perceived of Him to their own perception about Him that they might affirm His identity.

If Jesus were to direct the same question to you and ask about your thoughts concerning Him, what would your answer be?

Some might say, “Well, I don’t know anything about who He really is!” indicating disinterest or simply to evade the question. Yet in actual fact, most people do have opinions about Jesus which can be so diverse and numerous. Among these are noble suggestions such as a prophet, a spiritual teacher, a philosopher, a miracle worker, a great humanitarian and a revolutionist – all of which are not quite accurate. The bizarre and absurd ones include “a demoniac, a deceiver, a cult leader, a mythical character, or one of the gods”, which are downright blasphemous and completely missing the mark. Still others may reply, “Who cares?” to reveal an indifferent attitude.

How one regards Christ is a grave matter. Everyone will be held responsible for his opinion concerning Christ. Jesus made that clear, “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 10:32-33).

For a proper and fuller understanding of the glories of Jesus Christ, one must know what God has revealed concerning Him. All these have been revealed in His Word. Only the biblical truths therein offer us a perfect knowledge about who Christ really is. So our conviction concerning Him must concur with those divine revelations. Other than the biblical truths about Christ, no opinion from scholars, philosophers, or religious men can be accepted as a true perception of Him. To distort or to deny the divine revelations concerning Christ is to endanger one’s own soul.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Spirit of God has revealed many glorious truths of the supremacy of Christ, the Son of God. Some of the amazing facts about Christ in this epistle will be closely studied in the pages of this issue. The materials for these articles are extracted from my sermons preached in Gethsemane Bible-Presbyterian Church last year. Studying and preaching the topic of “The Pre-eminence of Christ” from the Book of Hebrews have been an exhilarating and blessed experience. I wish the same for all the readers of this issue.

It must be every Christian’s special joy to know more of Christ. No pursuit should be more important than knowing Jesus Christ, the crucified. “Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ” (Philippians 3:8).

More about Jesus would I know,
More of His grace to others show;
More of His saving fulness see,
More of His love who died for me.

To the excellency of the knowledge of Christ in the hearts of all our readers, we humbly dedicate this issue.

For Christ’s sake,
Editor

CHRIST

The Pre-eminent One

hebrews 1:1-3

As soon as one starts reading the Epistle to the Hebrews, his attention is quickly drawn to reflect upon the glories of Christ. In the first three verses, the reader is presented with seven supreme characteristics of Christ. It is very clear at the outset that the intention of the writer is to let his readers know Jesus Christ and His greatness.

Christ, the Ultimate Divine Revelation

Hebrews 1:2

² 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;

The epistle begins with the assertion that God had been revealing His truth through the prophets in the Old Testament period. So what we read in Scripture are not human ideas, opinions, reports or theories. It is God's Word. God revealed them by His prophets at various times and in varying ways. He used dreams, visions, audible voices, angels and theophanies among others to reveal His Word to the prophets. It was a progressive revelation.

His revelation comes to its climax in verse 2 which says that God "hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son". The ultimate revelation is God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Himself said, "... he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; ... the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works" (John 14:9-10). Hence Christ, being the ultimate divine revelation, is referred to as "the Word" by the Apostle John (John 1:1, 14; 1 John 1:1; 5:7; Revelation 19:13). Thus Scripture records that Jesus is the incarnate Word of God. "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). Christ is the full revelation of God. He alone can fully tell us who God is.

The phrase "these last days" in verse 2 is very significant. The Jews of antiquity understood this phrase as referring to the period of the Messianic fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecy. This concept is also found here. The "last days" began with Jesus' birth. He is the culmination of all of God's prophecies. Christ is the one anticipated as God's ultimate revelation mentioned in the Old Testament Scriptures (Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 7:14; Micah 5; Isaiah 53). Hence, we affirm that Christ is the final revelation of God and not any other prophet. He alone embodies God's truth. Whatever others may say about Christ to the contrary, we must continue to declare Him as the ultimate revelation of God.

Herein is the great wonder of Christ – "the boundless, limited in form; the eternal, dwelling in time; the invisible and spiritual God revealed in that Word of Life which human eyes have seen, and human hands have handled" (J. Caird).

Hebrews 1:2

² Hath in these last days spoken unto us

Christ, the Ultimate Divine Heir

The next description of Jesus Christ in verse 2 is that He is "his (God's) Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things". The title

by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

“Son”, which is commonly given to the Lord Jesus, denotes His peculiar relationship to God the Father. This title was understood by the Jews to denote equality with God (John 5:17-18; 10:33) and it is used here with the same thought.

It is also asserted that God appointed His Son to be heir to all things. Christ’s heirship to all things is evidence of His sonship. As the only begotten Son of God, He inherits everything the Father possesses. Christ is God’s eternal heir.

Here, one must be careful to avoid the heresy of “adoptionism” which advocates that Jesus became the Son at some point in time during His life on earth. This idea is derived from the phrase “whom he hath appointed heir”. The advocates of this view point to the Greek Aorist tense of the verb, which implies a simple action in the past. So they ask, “When did God appoint Jesus heir?” Some say it was at His baptism (cf. Matthew 3:17), while others say it was at His resurrection (cf. Romans 1:4). Such an idea stands oppose to Scripture’s insistence that Christ is eternally the divine Son of God. His sonship and heirship have already been declared in the Old Testament (cf. Psalm 2:7-8). Jesus Himself spoke of His heirship before His death and resurrection in John 16:15 - “All things that the Father hath are mine” (cf. John 13:3). Jesus was always God (cf. John 1:1–18; 8:57–58; Philippians 2:6–7; Colossians 1:17), and therefore, His heirship must pre-date His incarnation.

Christ, the Great Creator

Hebrews 1:2

² 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;

The third glorious truth about Christ in this passage is that it is He “by whom also he made the worlds” (v. 2c). God made the universe by Christ. The Greek word for “worlds” (*aiōnas*) is used for the whole universe encompassing space and time (cf. Hebrews 11:3).

He was the one through whom God made the heavens and the earth, and all that are therein. “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made” (John 1:3). The Apostle Paul also declared Christ as the Creator: “But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him” (1 Corinthians 8:6). In his other epistles, Paul repeated the assertion that “God created all things by Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 3:9; cf. Colossians 1:16-17).

Hebrews 1:3a

^{3a} Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person,

Christ, the Glorious God

The fourth truth of Christ's pre-eminence being expressed here is that He is the glorious God who is "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person" (v. 3a). Jesus Christ is "the brightness of his glory". In other words, the Son of God is the radiance of God's glory. In Him we see all the attributes of God – omnipotence, omniscience, fullness of grace, love, holiness, truth, etc. Christ is the effulgence of divine glory.

He is also "the express image of his person". In other words, Jesus is the exact representation of the Father. He is the perfect representation of God. Jesus is the same as God. The Son has the divine substance of the Father. He is one in essence with the Father. This was a bold proclamation of Jesus' deity. Jesus is God.

The Apostle Paul also expressed Christ's deity in a similar manner. Referring to Christ, he wrote that He "is the image of the invisible God" (Colossians 1:15), and that "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9). The incarnated Christ is the very fullness of God.

Christ, the Mighty Governor

Hebrews 1:3b

^{3b} 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 fifth aspect of Christ's supremacy mentioned in this passage is that He is "upholding all things by the word of his power" (v. 3b). The Greek verb for "uphold" (*pherō*) means "to carry, to bear, to support or to maintain". This verb is in the present tense, implying that Christ maintains all things continually. Nothing spins out of His governance. He not only made all things but also governs them, sustaining all His creation in their proper order and function. His omniscience and omnipotence surround everything in the universe and conserve them according to His sovereign plan. If it were not for Him, the sun, moon, stars and all the host of heaven would fall to the ground; and if it were not for Him, the birds of the air, the fishes of the sea, the beasts of the field would be destroyed in a moment; the earth would have sunk under the sea. Christ bears up all; He is the universal upholder.

He is not a passive spectator in the running of the universe but He directs them "by the word of his power". His sovereignty sets the universe in motion, and keeps it functioning just as He has planned. Christ exercises His rule over all by mere utterance. No other effort from Him is needed, for His spoken word is sufficient. Christ rules supreme over the world!

Christ, the Only Saviour

Hebrews 1:3c
3^c when he had by
himself purged our
sins,

The sixth aspect of Christ's pre-eminence mentioned is that "he had by himself purged our sins" (v. 3c). Christ shed His blood and died on the cross of Calvary for the redemption of His people from their sins. There is no Saviour except Christ. If anyone would repent of his sins and believe on Christ as his Lord and Saviour, he will be purged from all his sins. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Hebrews 9:14).

If anyone rejects the saving work of Christ, he will never be able to find remission for his sins. Hebrews 10:26 warns: "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins."

Christ, the Exalted King

Hebrews 1:3d
3^d sat down on the
right hand of the
Majesty on high:

The final facet of Christ's pre-eminence mentioned is that He has "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (v. 3d). The exaltation of Christ in heaven is pictured here. After He ascended into heaven upon His resurrection from the dead, Christ sat down with His glorious Father in heaven, who is referred to as "the Majesty on high". Jesus was greatly exalted as He took His seat on the right hand of God the Father.

Christ's sitting down at the Father's right hand depicts several magnificent truths about Him. Firstly, He is fully accepted by the Father as our triumphant and exalted Saviour, for He has done all that was required for our salvation. Hebrews 10:12 says, "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God." Secondly, He intercedes for His people before the Father. "It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Romans 8:34). Thirdly, He is highly exalted above all powers, and reigns supreme. The Apostle Peter says about Christ, "Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him" (1 Peter 3:22).

What a splendid portrayal of Jesus Christ did the Spirit of God reveal to us in Hebrews 1:1-3! He is the ultimate Prophet, Priest and King. No one is so highly exalted by God as Christ who is seated on His right hand! Christ is superior to all.

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Come and rejoice with us!

CHRIST

Superior to Angels

h e b r e w s 1 : 4 - 1 2

Angels are spectacular spiritual beings. They excel in strength (cf. Psalm 103:20). They are referred to as “a flaming fire” (Psalm 104:4), and their dazzling appearance has stunned and even rattled tough and rugged men of the Roman army (cf. Matthew 28:3-4).

The angels are accorded a higher standing than human beings in the hierarchy of God’s creation. The Psalmist has written that God has made man “a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour” (Psalm 8:5). Marvellous a creature as he is, man enjoys a much higher status than those belonging to the plant and animal kingdom. Yet, this is not the case when man is compared to angelic beings. For he is still considered “a little lower than the angels”. It is because of this fact that some of the Jews wondered: “How could Jesus be God, when He had incarnated and lived as a man? That would make Him lower than the angels!”

Hebrews 1:4-12 addresses this problematic question. It explains why Jesus Christ is greater than the angels, though He lived on earth as a man. It demonstrates and defends the fact that Christ is not only superior to the angels, but that He is also worshipped by all the angels.

In the preceding verse, the author has already pointed out some of the glories of Christ, which far exceed even the most dazzling of creatures. Christ is the brightness of God's glory (v. 3a). Christ is also the express image of the person of His Father (v. 3b). Hence, Christ's human nature, by its hypostatical union with His divine nature, has a grandeur which infinitely surpasses all the excellencies of the angelic beings. Christ's unique, matchless glory is further highlighted in the verses that follow.

Seated Far above the Angels

Hebrews 1:4

⁴Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

Christ is introduced as "being made so much better than the angels" (v. 4a). The words "being made" must not be taken to mean that Christ is a created being. The original Greek word (*ginomai*) is not the normal verb used to indicate the act of creation. It simply means "to become, or to come to pass". Moreover, when the word is considered in conjunction with the previous verse, it becomes very apparent that it is just an assertion of the exalted position of Christ when He "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (v. 3). When Jesus was seated on the right hand of God, He was proven far superior to the angels who surrounded the throne of God. Christ is now in heaven at the right hand of the Majesty, residing and reigning above the angels.

Christ, who is seated in the glory of the Father, is certainly "so much better than the angels". None should think of that little baby of Bethlehem as a mere man who was later denounced, crucified and buried. Though He condescended as a man, which is lower than the angels, His resurrection and His ascension to the Majesty on high confirmed His divine glory. Christ's present place at the right hand of the Father signifies that He is superior in dignity, power and dominion compared to the angels. He is now the exalted King of heaven to whom angels submit themselves as His servants. The Apostle Peter wrote concerning the ascended Christ: "Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him" (1 Peter 3:22).

More Excellent Name than the Angels

Hebrews 1:4

⁴Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

The next section of verse 4 says Christ “hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they” (v. 4b). The phrase “hath by inheritance obtained” (*klēronomeō*) depicts Christ as the heir of God. It is an affirmation that Christ is the Son of God. Earlier, in verse 2, Christ was already depicted as “his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.”

The more excellent name (or designation) of Christ is “the Son”. He is known as the Son of God, even God’s “only begotten Son” (John 3:16). As God’s eternal Son, Christ certainly has a more excellent name than the angels who were created only as ministering spirits.

Hebrews 1:5

⁵For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?

So the writer of Hebrews rhetorically asks in verse 5, “For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?” It is an argument from the silence of the Scriptures. It is a fact that God the Father had never said to any angel at any time, “Thou art my Son”.

The declaration, “I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son” is taken from 2 Samuel 7:14 where it is prophesied in view of Christ, the greater son of David. At times, angels were collectively referred to as “the sons of God”, in the sense that they were created by God. But not a single angel has ever been called “son of God”. Christ alone is the eternally begotten Son of God.

From all eternity, Christ, the second person of the Trinity, has the name “the Son of God”. Some commentators have denied the eternal sonship of Christ, saying that He came to be known as the Son only after His incarnation. But Scripture teaches otherwise. In the Old Testament, even before His incarnation, Christ was identified as “the Son” (cf. Psalm 2:7, 12; Isaiah 9:6; Proverbs 30:4; Daniel 3:25). Moreover, John 3:16 declares that it is “his only begotten Son” that God gave to us. It certainly does not support the notion that God gave us someone who became the Son of God after He was sent into the world. Hebrews 1:6 is another proof that Jesus did not become the begotten Son after He came into this world because it says that God “bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world”.

Christ alone is the eternal Son of God; and that name explains His superiority over the glorious angelic beings. His name is infinitely more excellent than theirs.

Worshipped by the Angels

Hebrews 1:6

⁶And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.

When Christ came into this world, the Father demanded that the angels worship Him. Verse 6 states “And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.”

According to the inspired writer of Hebrews, when God sent His Son into this world, He laid the necessity upon all the angels of God to worship Him. Generally, theologians see this statement as a citation from Psalm 97:7, which was understood by the Jews as a messianic prediction. Christ was worshipped by the angels all through eternity, and God the Father has decreed that the same should be the case even when He was brought to the earth as a man.

From the record of Luke 2:9-14, we know that the angels were bidden to worship and declare the praises of Christ who was born as a son of the virgin in Bethlehem. “And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”

Angels worshipped Christ in His days of incarnation as much as they worshipped Him before. The Apostle Paul also testified to this truth in 1 Timothy 3:16 when he wrote: “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.”

Ministered by the Angels

Hebrews 1:7

⁷ And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.

In order to further assert Christ's superiority over the angels, the writer of Hebrews affirms that angels are His ministering spirits - "Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire" (v. 7; cf. Psalm 104:4). The Greek word for "maketh" (*poieo*) means "create". The Lord Jesus is the Creator of all things, including angels. He created them as awesome creatures, for they are referred to as "his ministers a flaming fire". Then one group of angels is called seraphim which means the "burning ones" (cf. Isaiah 6:1). They may be spectacular and awe-inspiring creatures, yet they are His ministers, ready to do Him service. Psalm 18:10 states: "And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind."

Hebrews 1:8-9

⁸ But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.

⁹ Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

While angels are referred to as ministering spirits, Christ is depicted in the verses that follow as the sovereign, eternal, righteous Son of God. In verses 8 and 9, referring to Christ, it is said, "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows" (cf. Psalm 45:6-7). In this messianic doxology, Christ's superiority above the angels is affirmed: "therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." The point made here is that Christ is exalted above the angels who surround Him as His ministers. Christ is indeed the Lord of all these angelic associates around Him.

The records of the Gospel testify how the angels ministered to Jesus while He was on earth. They told about His birth to Mary (cf. Luke 1:26-38) and to Joseph (cf. Matthew 1:20, 24). They also announced His birth to the shepherds and praised God saying, "Glory to God in the highest" (Luke 2:8-15). When Herod the king sought to kill baby Jesus, an angel warned Joseph about the plot and advised him to go to Egypt with Mary and the baby (cf. Matthew 2:13). An angel was also involved in bringing the family of Jesus back to Israel from Egypt after the death of Herod (cf. Matthew 2:19-20).

Angels ministered to Christ after He had fasted 40 days, and was tempted by the devil in the wilderness (cf. Matthew 4:11; Mark 1:13). Likewise, they ministered to Him in the garden of Gethsemane, when He prayed in agony (cf. Luke 22:43). They were also seen at His resurrection (cf. Matthew 28:2-4; John

20:12); and we are told that Christ will soon come with His angels (cf. Matthew 16:27; 25:31). In Matthew 24:31, we read: “He shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

Conclusion

It is a terrible blasphemy to think of Christ as just a good man or a kind angelic being. He is infinitely greater than all the angels who, in turn, are higher creatures than man. Though He took on human nature, Christ is also fully God. Christ is God-man. To the angels, the incarnated Christ is the eternal Son of God, and hence, their object of worship and service.

If creatures higher than us stood in subordination to the exalted Christ, how much more should we be careful to worship and serve Him? Let us, like the angelic hosts, worship and serve Christ, our Lord, with joy and reverence. Christ, as God’s only begotten Son, is far glorious and infinitely greater than the angels. If the angels unceasingly give glory to Him, shall we, who are a little lower than the angels, not do likewise?

*“And suddenly there was with the angel
a multitude of the heavenly host
praising God, and saying,
Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace,
good will toward men”*

Luke 2:13-14

CHRIST

Greater than Moses

hebrews 3:1 - 6

From the opening lines of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the supremacy of Christ is established. He is the greatest and the ultimate prophet through whom God had revealed Himself (cf. Hebrews 1:1-2). This supremacy of Christ over the prophets is reiterated in Hebrews chapter 3 where Christ is proven to be greater than the prophet Moses. But why was Moses considered for comparison?

To the Jews who regarded Moses as the greatest of all their prophets, the superiority of Christ over Moses would have been a startling message. The thought that someone was a greater prophet than Moses would be troubling enough to elicit from the Jews the question “How can Jesus be greater than Moses?” A brief look at the Jewish perspective on Moses would explain the reason why.

Moses is the most highly regarded figure in Jewish history. Being raised by God as Israel's great leader, his life was filled with God's special, providential and miraculous workings. While yet a baby, the hand of God preserved him when he was laid in an ark made by his mother in order to hide him from the soldiers of Pharaoh. Around the time of Moses' birth, Pharaoh had decreed that all the male Hebrew newborns must be killed (cf. Exodus 1:22-2:10).

Moses then grew up to be appointed by God to deliver Israel out of Egypt, where they had lived as slaves for 430 years. By his hand, God performed great miracles to weaken the mighty Pharaoh in order to secure Israel's liberty. After their exodus from Egypt, God continued to do mighty acts through Moses in providing for, protecting and directing millions of Israelites as they wandered in the wilderness for about 40 years. Such magnificent leadership earned for Moses a very high stature in Jewish history.

It is written of Moses that the LORD spake unto him "... face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend" (Exodus 33:11). Moses saw the glory of God (cf. Exodus 33:18-23); and the glow of the divine glory reflected from his face (cf. Exodus 34:30).

Of greatest significance to the Jewish people was the fact that the law (Torah) came through Moses. In fact, the law became so identified with Moses that it was commonly referred to as the "law of Moses". The law was at the heart of Jewish life; the Old Testament commandments and rituals were their highest priority. Paul even mentioned that the Jews boasted in the law (cf. Romans 2:17, 23). Moses had not only given them the Ten Commandments; he had also penned the entire Pentateuch. The Levitical priesthood and sacrifices were instituted through him. Finally, when he died, God Himself dug his grave (cf. Deuteronomy 34:5-6).

The high honour that the Jews had rendered to Moses is not without basis as the Old Testament Scriptures has this testimony concerning him: "And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face" (Deuteronomy 34:10).

Nonetheless, the Jews must know that there is one who is greater than Moses, even Jesus Christ. So the inspired writer of Hebrews presents two arguments to bolster the case for Christ's pre-eminence.

Christ was no less faithful than Moses

Hebrews 3:1

¹Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;

The passage calls the reader to consider the two offices which Jesus fulfilled. The two offices in which He ministered are “the Apostle and the High Priest of our profession” (3:1b). The term “apostle” means one who is sent forth, like an ambassador, with a message and authority. Christ is the Apostle, whom God sent into the world. In John’s Gospel, Christ is frequently referred to as sent by God to make known His will unto His people (cf. John 3:34; 5:36). That was true of Jesus who said, “I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak” (John 12:49). He is the One, whom Moses and all other prophets of old had prophesied, to be sent by God.

The Apostle Peter said to the Jews of Jerusalem, “For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, and in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities” (Acts 3:22-26). Summed up, Peter is saying unequivocally that Christ is the prophet whose coming even Moses and the rest of the Old Testament prophets had anticipated.

Jesus Christ is also “the High Priest of our profession”. He was an infinitely better High Priest than all other high priests of Israel. It was already stated in Hebrews 2:17 that Christ is “a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people”. As an High Priest, Christ is our supreme intercessor before God (cf. Hebrews 4:14-7:28).

Hebrews 3:2

²Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house.

In His offices, Jesus was “faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house” (v. 2; cf. Numbers 12:6-7). That Christ is faithful to God the Father just as Moses was, simply affirms that Christ was not inferior to Moses at all. Here, the Jews who were so captivated by Moses, their “prophet par excellence”, are challenged to think of Christ above him. So the author of

Hebrews presents Jesus as an equal, nay, even a greater prophet than Moses was. Moses had lapses in his faithfulness but Jesus was absolutely and impeccably faithful to the Father who sent Him to the world. He always did the Father's will. Jesus said, "I do always those things that please him" (John 8:29).

Christ is more glorious than Moses

Hebrews 3:3

³ For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house.

Although verse 2 depicts Moses' faithfulness in the same breath as Jesus', there is a difference. In verse 3, we read about Jesus that "... this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses". Here, the Spirit of God asserts that Christ is more excellent than Moses. The Gospel prophet, Jesus Christ, is far superior to Moses, the greatest of Jewish prophets! Moses' face once shone with the glory of God, but it was only a reflection – a transitory glory. On the other hand, Christ's glory is a "glory that excelleth" (2 Corinthians 3:10). The superiority of Christ's glory over Moses' is further explained in verses 3 to 6 with reference to His position and person.

Christ is the builder of the house which Moses is a part of

Hebrews 3:3-4

³ For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house.

⁴ For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God.

It is said about Christ's greater glory that "inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house. For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God" (vv. 3b-4).

Moses was a great leader in the house of Israel, but only by appointment of the One who built it, even Jesus Christ. In other words, Moses was called to be a servant of the house which Christ built.

A renowned commentator puts it this way: "Moses did not make men children of God; Christ does. Moses came to a people who were already the Lord's by covenant relationship; whereas Christ takes up those who are dead in trespasses and sins, and creates them anew. Thus as the founder of the family is entitled to the highest honour from the family, so Christ is worthy of more glory than Moses" (A. W. Pink, *An Exposition of Hebrews*, p. 150).

As an added emphasis to Christ's superiority over Moses, it is said in verse 4: "For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God." Christ has not only built "the house" but also "all things". He created all things (cf. Hebrews 1:2; John 1:3), including Israel. That is evidence of His deity. Thus how much greater glory than Moses is He justly entitled to!

Christ is the Son, but Moses a servant

Hebrews 3:5

⁵ And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after;

There was a special purpose for Moses' role as a faithful servant in the house of Israel which Christ built. It was "for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after" (v. 5b). The word "testimony" (Greek: *martúron*) means "witness". All that Moses did as a servant in God's house were meant to be a witness of the things that would be revealed in the future.

In other words, the law and the system of worship with all its ceremonies which Moses implemented in the house of Israel were a witness to the truths that were to be made plain afterwards. The law which Moses instituted was the shadow of good things yet to come in Christ. The Mosaic ministry prefigured the Messiah's atoning sacrifice and the heavenly tabernacle (cf. 10:1; 8:5). Moses served as a prototype of Jesus the Messiah that was to come (cf. Deuteronomy 18:15, 18).

This is why Christ said to the Jews, "For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me" (John 5:46). The same truth is implied in Luke 24:27: "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." Moses' life and ministry were dedicated to the greater glory of Christ.

Hebrews 3:6

⁶ 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.

Unlike Moses, Christ was not a servant. They have vastly different positions in the household of faith. "Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we" (v. 6a). As the Son, Christ is "over his own house". Moses served for a time in His house, but Christ reigns over it forever. In John 8:35, Jesus said, "The servant abideth not in the house forever; but the Son abideth ever." Servants of the house of God would come and go, but the Son abides as its head forever.

Moses had an important role in God's plan, but he was only a part of the house. Christ is the founder and heir of the household. The house of Christ is made up of believers, whether Jews or Gentiles. If you have believed in Christ, you are part of His household. As the household members of Christ, let us serve Him in faithfulness as Moses did. Likewise, "hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end" (v. 6b).

CHRIST

Exalted on High

hebrews 1:3b,13; 8:1b; 10:12; 12:2

The story of Jesus Christ did not end with His humiliation, crucifixion and burial. In fact, His death led His people to greater anticipation because He had spoken of great and mighty things that would follow: His resurrection (Matthew 12:39-40; 20:17-19; 26:30-32; Luke 18:31-33; John 2:19-22), ascension and being with the Father in His glory (Luke 9:31, 51; John 6:62; 7:33; 12:32; 14:12, 28; 16:5, 10, 17, 28; 20:17), the new dispensation of the Spirit and global Gospel advancement (Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:18-20), and the preparation of a place for all His people in glory (John 14:2-3). The power and glory of His person is to have a greater impact after His death.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews, there are more account of the ascension of Christ and its implications than in any other part of the New Testament. The repeated assertion that Christ is at the “right hand of the Majesty on high” (Hebrews 1:3b, 13; 8:1b; 10:12; 12:2) is to emphasize its important implications with reference to Christians’ belief, hope and practice. Other books of the New Testament also mention the significance of the present exalted position of Christ (cf. Romans 8:34; Ephesians 1:20; Philippians 2:9; Colossians 3:1; 1 Peter 3:22; 1 John 2:1).

In this article, five major implications of Christ’s present exalted position in heaven, as explained in the Epistle to the Hebrews, are considered.

Our Highly Exalted King

Hebrews 1:3

³ 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:

Hebrews 1:3 says that Christ “sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high”. Here, the phrase “the Majesty on high” refers to God the Father. “Majesty” signifies God’s supreme sovereignty. “On high” signifies the most elevated exaltation possible. Together they represent the unparalleled, sublime glory of God. “Right hand” denotes the power (Exodus 15:6), honour (1 Kings 2:19) and pleasure (Psalm 16:11) of God. Now the truth that Christ is seated in such a high, honourable and lofty estate, in the same glory as God the Father, portrays the supreme glory and dignity that Jesus presently possesses.

Here, it is shown that the highest seat in the universe now belongs to Him who once had nowhere to lay His head. Christ, who descended into such profound depths of shame for the salvation of sinners, is now elevated to the highest possible dignity and position. It is this great truth concerning Christ that Paul testified in Philippians 2:8-9: “And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.”

Christ’s present posture as being seated is yet another portrayal of the great honour and authority vested in Him above all others. As Revelation 5:13 declares, “And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.”

Hebrews 1:13

¹³ But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?

It also symbolizes His coming triumph and exaltation over His enemies. In order to show Christ's superiority over the angels, Hebrews 1:13 issues this rhetoric: "But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?" This quotation from Psalm 110, verse 1, shows that Christ is now seated in anticipation of His ultimate victory over all His enemies, which the Father has promised Him. This truth is repeated in Hebrews 10:12-13: "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool."

The enemies of Christ are Satan and his demons, the unrepentant and unbelieving sinners, and sin. All these will soon be subjugated and dealt with. They will be crushed beneath His infinite power. It is said that they shall "be made his footstool". This expression arose from the custom of ancient conquerors who put their feet on the necks of their enemies as a symbol of subjugation. Christ's enemies shall be thoroughly and completely subdued. Now, He is eagerly waiting for the appointed time of this glorious triumph. Hence, we should not suppose that He is inactive concerning the subjugation of His enemies. As much as Christ is the Saviour of those who come to Him in repentance and faith, He is the exalted King who is ready to crush His enemies and trample them under His feet.

The seated Christ shall soon arise to subdue and judge all His enemies. Paul declares concerning this impending great victory of Christ, "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all" (1 Corinthians 15:24-28).

Our Perfect Saviour

Secondly, Christ being seated on the right hand of God is an emphatic indication of the completion of His redemptive work. Hebrews 1:3 testifies to this truth: "... when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on

high.” It shows that He has accomplished the purification of our sins by His own sacrificial work on our behalf. What a wonderful announcement - “he had by himself purged our sins”!

Hebrews 1:11-12

¹¹ And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:

¹² But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;

When Israel’s priests offered sacrifices in the tabernacle, they stood daily, ministering. There was no chair among the Tabernacle’s furniture for them to be seated. It was symbolic of the fact that their offering of sacrifice could not remove sins fully. Hebrews chapter 10 attests to this truth: “And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God” (vv. 11, 12).

Christ’s work of our redemption is completed; so, on the cross He declared, “It is finished” (John 19:30). He dealt with our sins, once and for all. No more sacrifice for our purification is ever needed. What Israel’s high priests could not do, Christ has done! He is our seated High Priest, even at the right hand side of God the Father. “We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens” (Hebrews 8:1b). What a great Saviour our Lord Jesus Christ is!

Our Perpetual Intercessor

Hebrews 7:25

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.

Thirdly, Christ’s abiding presence before God as our High Priest provides us with a powerful and effective intercessor. Hebrews 7:25 affirms: “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.” In chapter 9, verse 24, it is also unequivocally declared that Christ has entered heaven, “now to appear in the presence of God for us”.

The Lord Jesus lives a mediatorial life for us in heaven. He not only died for us, but also lives for us and intercedes for us. Having offered a perfect sacrifice for us, He appears before the Father to plead our case on the merit of His perfect work. Thus, His intercession before God, on our behalf, secures our eternal redemption.

This truth is also reiterated by John: “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 John 2:1). Likewise, Paul says in Romans 8:34, “Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen

again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.” Whether it is another person or our own conscience that accuses us of our sins, we can find assurance in the knowledge that Christ intercedes for us before God. O, what a Saviour Jesus my Lord is!

Our Forerunner to Heaven

Hebrews 6:19-20

¹⁹ Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;

²⁰ Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

Fourthly, the exalted Christ is depicted as our forerunner to heaven: “Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec” (Hebrews 6:19-20).

The Greek word for “forerunner” (*prodromos*) means “the one who went before” or “the one who ran on ahead”. Its implication here is that of a precursor, that is to say, one who goes on ahead in order to show the way or to pioneer on behalf of someone else. Since it is used here with the imagery of a harbour (“anchor” – v. 19), it gives the picture of the role of sailors who leave their ship in a small boat in order to carry the anchor forward to a place where it can be firmly lodged.

By entering the heavenly sanctuary as our High Priest, Christ has provided a firm anchorage for our souls concerning our hope of heaven; and in this regard He is our forerunner to heaven. He entered God’s presence on our account, preparing the way for our entrance. So we can say, “Jesus led me all the way.”

Having such a forerunner in Christ, our High Priest, our hope cannot be shaken loose amidst the storms and tempests around us. Jesus went ahead of us into heaven so that we have a safe passage to that celestial home which He is preparing for us (cf. John 14:3).

“And hitherto my Lord hath led,
Today He guides each step I tread,
And soon in heav’n it will be said,
Jesus led me all the way.”

- John W. Peterson

Our Sympathetic Succourer

Hebrews 4:15

¹⁵ For we have not an high priest which

Finally, He is depicted as our sympathetic helper, who now lives in heaven. In His exalted position in heaven, He is not forgetful or unconcerned about our woes on earth. He lives as the

cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

sympathetic High Priest. This is yet another truth that is relayed to us in Hebrews about Christ, our enthroned Priest at the right hand of God: “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15).

Jesus lives in heaven but is not far removed from our troubles and concerns. He had experienced intense assault of temptations and trials while He was on earth (cf. Hebrews 5:7). Yet, He never succumbed to satanic assaults of sin. In all His thoughts, words and actions, He remained holy and faithful to His God.

Being acquainted with our struggles, He is our true representative before God. He understands our fears, troubles, hurts and sorrows. He also fully understands the severity of sinful temptations, though He triumphed over them. So, He is sympathetic towards us when we call on Him for His help in our struggles. Hebrews 2:18 promises us: “For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.” Christ our High Priest is both willing and able to help us.

Conclusion

Oh, what a Saviour is Jesus our Lord! Though highly exalted above all, yet so condescending to attend to our cries! So supreme in majesty, and yet so full of tenderness and compassion! While dwelling in unspeakable triumph and jubilant glory, Christ is “touched with the feeling of our infirmities”.

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BIBLE TRIVIA - EXODUS 1

Sarah Yong

READ THE PASSAGE FROM YOUR BIBLE. EACH SCROLL CONTAINS THREE DESCRIPTIONS OF PEOPLE MENTIONED IN EXODUS 1. GIVE THE ANSWER FOR EACH CATEGORY BY FILLING IN THE REMAINING LETTERS IN THE BOXES. USE THE NUMBERED LETTERS TO REVEAL THE SPECIAL MESSAGE BELOW..

- KNEW NOT JOSEPH
- TOLD SHIPHRAH AND PUAH TO KILL NEWBORN BOYS
- COMMANDED THAT MALE BABIES BE CAST INTO THE RIVER

17 11 10 3

- TWO WOMEN
- INSTRUCTED TO KILL MALE BABIES AFTER DELIVERY
- THEY FEARED GOD AND HE DEALT WELL WITH THEM

1 16 5 7

- WERE FRUITFUL, AND INCREASED ABUNDANTLY AND MULTIPLIED
- FORCED TO DO MANUAL LABOUR
- WAXED VERY MIGHTY AND MULTIPLIED

13 8 15 6 2

- AFFLICTED THE ISRAELITES
- MADE THEM WORK WITH RIGOUR
- MADE THEIR LIVES BITTER WITH HARD BONDAGE

9 12 14 4

SPECIAL MESSAGE!

1 2 3 4 4 3 5 6 4 3 7 3 8 9 10 11 10 11 10 11 10 11 3

15 3 14 8 3 12 13 12 13 3 2 10 8 5 ; 12 13 14 12

K
16 14 2 17 3 12 13 6 11 13 6 4 16 14 9

The two women in Exodus chapter 1 feared God and chose to obey Him. It pleases the Lord when we fear the Lord, obey His Word and walk in His way. Do you know where to find the above verse in the Bible?

Answers to Vol. 10, Issue 5 - Bible Trivia - Genesis 50

p. 29 - 1 (E), 2(F), 3 (G), 4 (I), 5 (O), 6 (R), 7 (V).

FORGIVE EVERY ONE HIS BROTHER THEIR TRESPASSES.

"Jesus Transforms Lives"

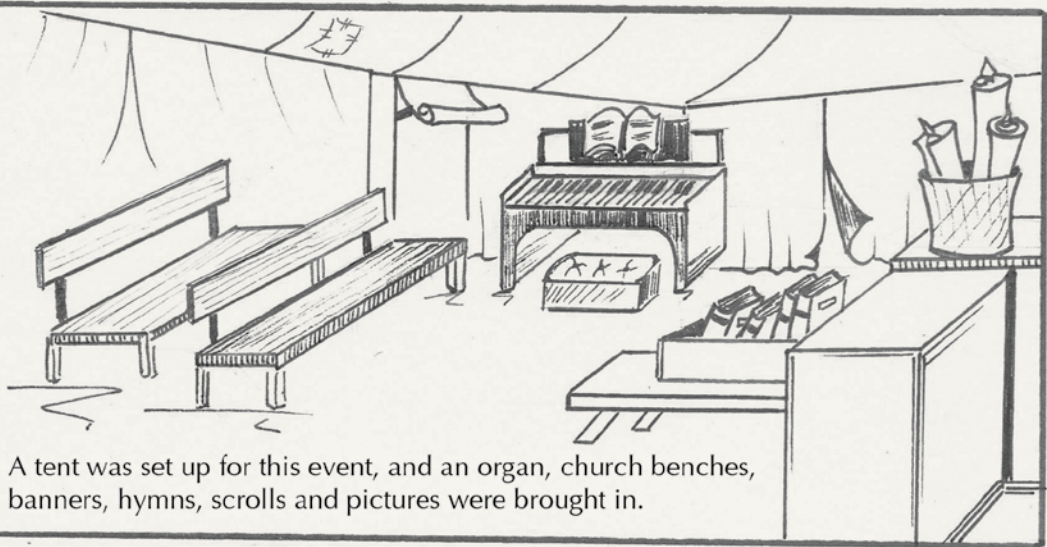
A real incident from the life of
Jonathan Goforth,
a Canadian missionary to China.

Bibliography: "Goforth of China" by Rosalind Goforth.
The stories are retold by Sis Ruth Low.
Illustrations by Sis Melanie Ferreira.

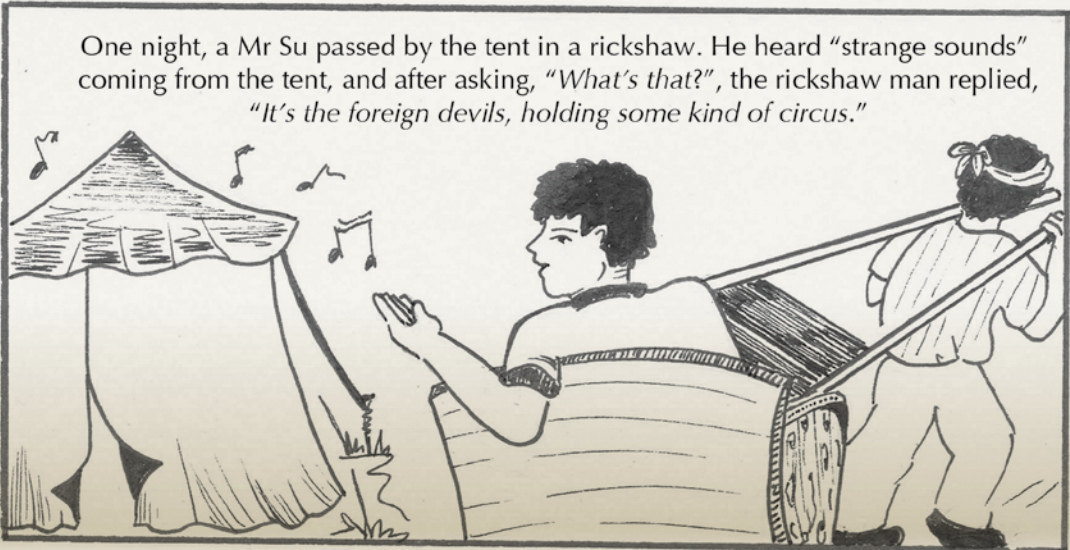
Mr Jonathan Goforth decided to lead
a one-month evangelistic campaign to reach
out to the people in the city of Changte, China.



A tent was set up for this event, and an organ, church benches,
banners, hymns, scrolls and pictures were brought in.



One night, a Mr Su passed by the tent in a rickshaw. He heard "strange sounds"
coming from the tent, and after asking, "What's that?", the rickshaw man replied,
"It's the foreign devils, holding some kind of circus."



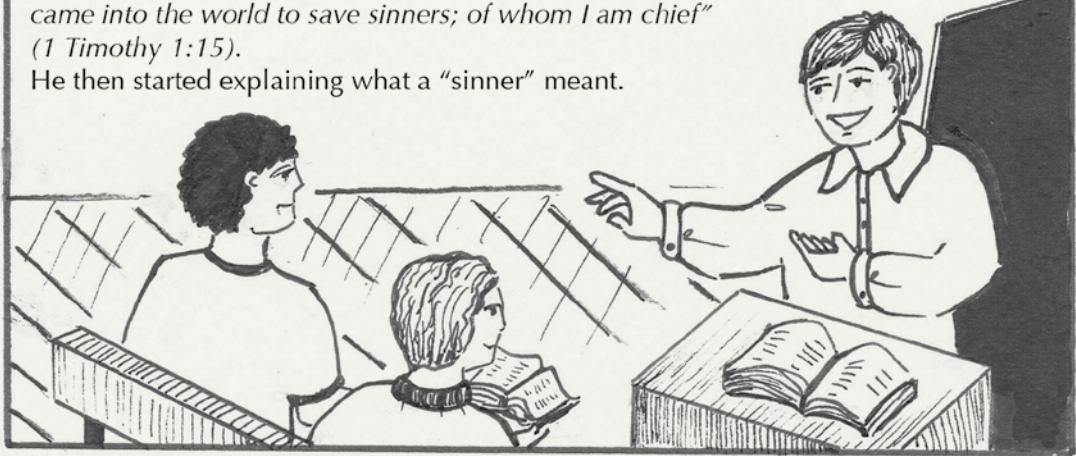
Mr Su had been drinking, and was quite drunk. He paid his fare and walked unsteadily into the tent.

Upon seeing a foreign woman playing the organ and a foreign child with his violin, Mr Su sat right in front to get a good view of the "strange circus"!



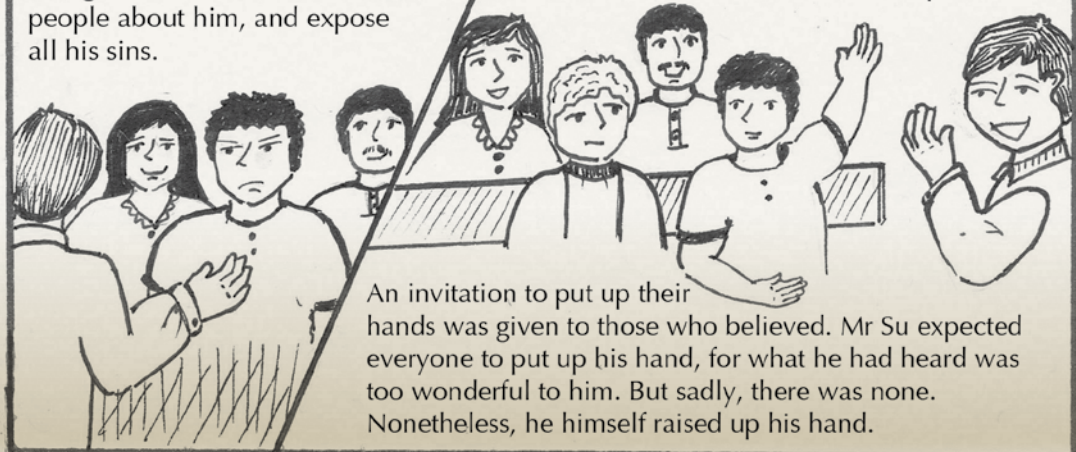
Then Mr Goforth stood up and read from the Chinese Bible: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (1 Timothy 1:15).

He then started explaining what a "sinner" meant.



Mr Su became very angry that this foreign devil would dare tell all the people about him, and expose all his sins.

But slowly, as he became sober, he accepted the truth about himself and the Gospel.



An invitation to put up their hands was given to those who believed. Mr Su expected everyone to put up his hand, for what he had heard was too wonderful to him. But sadly, there was none. Nonetheless, he himself raised up his hand.

The next day, he came to Mr Goforth and said to him,



Mr Goforth cheerfully agreed.

*Pastor, take me wherever you go.
I want to learn how last night I could
simply leave my past life of sin.*

*I have no more desire for those wicked
things that once bound me.*

*I want to learn this wonderful secret
that I may help others.*

Mr Su gave up his job and followed Mr Goforth wherever he preached.



By God's grace,

Mr Su never went back to his sinful ways. He grew so much in his spiritual life that the other evangelists came to Mr Goforth and asked him if Mr Su could lead a Bible class with them.



Such was the marvellous change that Jesus had done in the life of Mr Su, once an unrepentant sinner and drunkard who turned to the Lord Jesus for the forgiveness of his sins!



2 CORINTHIANS 5:17

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

Children, just as Jesus had saved and transformed Mr Su, He too can cleanse us from our sins and make us good and obedient boys and girls. Do you want to stop doing naughty things that grieve God's heart? Ask and trust the Lord to help you to do so today!

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