
The Book of Hebrews – The Superiority of Christ

...God has spoken to us in His Son...(Hebrews 1:2)

Hebrews 1:10-14

10 And, "YOU, LORD, IN THE BEGINNING LAID THE FOUNDATION OF THE EARTH, AND THE HEAVENS ARE THE WORKS OF YOUR HANDS; 11 THEY WILL PERISH, BUT YOU REMAIN; AND THEY ALL WILL BECOME OLD LIKE A GARMENT, 12 AND LIKE A MANTLE YOU WILL ROLL THEM UP; LIKE A GARMENT THEY WILL ALSO BE CHANGED. BUT YOU ARE THE SAME, AND YOUR YEARS WILL NOT COME TO AN END." 13 But to which of the angels has He ever said, "SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET?" 14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?

Let me introduce to a man known as Edwin Thomas Booth. Edwin lived in the mid 1800's and although his full name might not be familiar to you, he was considered one of the first great American actors. A brilliant study, at age 15 he debuted on the stage playing Tressel to his father's Richard III. Within a few short years he was playing the lead in Shakespearean tragedies throughout the United States and Europe. He was well-known, well-admired and often sought after. He was known to bring a spirit of tragedy to his acting that put him in a class by himself.

In and around 1864, Edwin, while waiting for a train on the platform in Jersey City, witnessed the coach he was about to board bolting forward. He turned to see that a young boy had slipped from the edge of the pressing crowd into the path of the oncoming train. Without thinking, Edwin raced to the edge of the platform and, linking his leg around the railing, grabbed the boy by the collar, yanking him to safety. The grateful boy recognized him, but he didn't recognize the boy. For this act of bravery, Edwin received a letter from General Adams Budeau, the Chief Secretary to General Ulysses S. Grant, thanking him for the act of bravery. Edwin carried this letter with him wherever he went.

Now Edwin had a younger brother, John, who was also an actor. Although he could not be compared with his older brother Edwin, he did give a memorable interpretation of Brutus in the 1863 production of Julius Caesar, by the New York Winter Garden Theater. However, it would be two years later that he would perform his last role in a theater when he jumped from the box of a bloodied President Lincoln to the stage of Ford's Theater. John Wilkes Booth met the end he deserved. But his murderous life placed a stigma on the once applauded reputation of his brother Edwin.

Now, an invisible asterisk now stood beside the name of Edwin Thomas Booth in the minds of the people. He was no longer Edwin Booth the

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consummate tragedian, but Edwin Booth the brother of the assassin. He retired from the stage to ponder the question why? Edwin Booth's life was a tragic accident simply because of his last name. The sensationalists wouldn't let him separate himself from the crime.

Remember that act of bravery that I told you about where Edwin saved the boy from the oncoming train. That letter could have vindicated Edwin from the sibling attachment to John Wilkes Booth. For the boy that Edwin saved that day was none other than Robert Todd Lincoln, the son of his brother's future victim. However, his reputation had been scarred by the infamous act of his brother, forcing Edwin into quite seclusion the rest of his days.

Reputation is a significant thing. Proverbs 22:1 says, "**A good name is to be more desired than great wealth, favor is better than silver and gold.**" In the New Testament, both Elders and widows serving the church are to be people of good reputation. In Acts 6, the apostles called upon the congregation to select for themselves seven men of good reputation to serve the tables (Acts 6:3). A reputation, according to Webster's, is the "overall quality or character as seen or judged by people in general" and "a place in public esteem or regard : a good name."

This morning I would like to present to you the final of the four thoughts the author of Hebrews uses to prove the superiority of the Son over the angels. We have already seen that the Son is superior over the angels by rank – that is His name and position identify the Son as superior as seen in verses 4-5; we have seen the Son superior over the angels by reverence – that all of the angels of God are commanded to worship the Son as God in verse 6; and we have noted that the Son is superior over the angels by rule – that the Son has the inherent nature to rule the universe and cosmos by virtue of the fact that He is God, He is Righteousness and He is Good. The angels by contrast are created beings and servants of the Son. So now we come to the fourth thought showing the superiority of the Son over the angels, namely that the Son is superior over the angels by reputation. As we look at the overall quality or character of the Son and of the angels and judge between them, it is to be obviously clear that Jesus out ranks, out shines, out works and is simply greater and better than any and all the angels.

In verses 10-14 then we find the author of this letter using two final Old Testament quotations to reveal the reasons why the Son's reputation is superior to the angels. Here in these verses, it is my intention to point out no less than five attributes, or characteristics given to the Son that reveal Him not only better than the angels, but of having the reputation of being nothing less than God

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Himself. Beginning in verse 10 then, let us consider this divine attributes one by one.

1. The Son is Creator (v. 10)

And, “YOU, LORD, IN THE BEGINNING LAID THE FOUNDATION OF THE EARTH, AND THE HEAVENS ARE THE WORKS OF YOUR HANDS...”

Our text begins with a small and unassuming little word. That word is “and.” We might not often pay attention to such a word, but we must not miss its importance to our study here in Hebrews. “And” is serving as a conjunction, linking the previous thoughts and truths to what we are about to read. The author has been proving the point of Christ’s superiority over the angels and it is this thought that the author now continues, lest we forget.

Next we read, ***“You, LORD, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth and the heavens are the works of your hands...”*** This is the first part of our sixth Old Testament quotation used by the author to prove the superiority of Christ. It is from Psalm 102:25-27 and will be used here in verse 10 all the way through verse 12.

Often, as we have looked at the various Old Testament passages quoted by the author, mostly Psalms, we have also noted that the Psalms quoted are what we call Messianic Psalms, or Psalms that speak prophetically about the Messiah or Christ, that is Jesus. So far, each of the Psalms quoted were generally regarded even by the Jews as Messianic. But as we come to Psalm 102, we have a different story. Psalm 102 was not generally regarded as Messianic at all. Rather, it reads more simply as a prayer of a man who is in anguish and in need of the mercy of God. My point is, we would not have known to apply this Psalm to Christ apart from the fact that the Holy Spirit used it as such here in Hebrews 1. I realize that this will take some time, but I would like to read and outline for you Psalm 102 so that we might come to appreciate what it is telling us about our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Please turn to Psalm 102.

Psalm 102 is a Psalm of sorrow and it expresses then the soul and sorrow of Christ prior to His coming to the cross. As I read through it, consider that Christ might well have uttered such words either in the Garden of Gethsemane or perhaps on Calvary itself.

In verses 1-11, notice what would be the travail of Christ:

1 Hear my prayer, O LORD! And let my cry for help come to You. 2 Do not hide Your face from me in the day of my distress; Incline Your ear to me; In the day when I call answer me quickly. 3 For my days have been consumed in smoke,

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And my bones have been scorched like a hearth. 4 My heart has been smitten like grass and has withered away, Indeed, I forget to eat my bread. 5 Because of the loudness of my groaning My bones cling to my flesh. 6 I resemble a pelican of the wilderness; I have become like an owl of the waste places. 7 I lie awake, I have become like a lonely bird on a housetop. 8 My enemies have reproached me all day long; Those who deride me have used my name as a curse. 9 For I have eaten ashes like bread And mingled my drink with weeping 10 Because of Your indignation and Your wrath, For You have lifted me up and cast me away. 11 My days are like a lengthened shadow, And I wither away like grass.

In verses 12-22 we will read of the trust of Christ for God to bring a blessed future:

12 But You, O LORD, abide forever, And Your name to all generations. 13 You will arise and have compassion on Zion; For it is time to be gracious to her, For the appointed time has come. 14 Surely Your servants find pleasure in her stones And feel pity for her dust. 15 So the nations will fear the name of the LORD And all the kings of the earth Your glory. 16 For the LORD has built up Zion; He has appeared in His glory. 17 He has regarded the prayer of the destitute And has not despised their prayer. 18 This will be written for the generation to come, That a people yet to be created may praise the LORD. 19 For He looked down from His holy height; From heaven the LORD gazed upon the earth, 20 To hear the groaning of the prisoner, To set free those who were doomed to death, 21 That men may tell of the name of the LORD in Zion And His praise in Jerusalem, 22 When the peoples are gathered together, And the kingdoms, to serve the LORD.

Now, in verses 23-24a we read of the trial of Christ as He states the tragedy of being cut off so young from this life:

23 He has weakened my strength in the way; He has shortened my days. 24 I say, "O my God, do not take me away in the midst of my days..."

What is more moving than this - that the Lord Jesus Christ, the perfect Man, should, being but in His mid 30's, be deemed by men as unfit to live any longer?

But now, beginning with Psalm 102:24b and finishing out to the end of the chapter, there is a change in how the Holy Spirit considered this to be addressed.

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As we read it in Psalm 102, the thought would be that the author was simply continuing his address to God. But the author of Hebrews does something fascinating. He attributes these statements not as being addressed to God by a man, but rather now by God the Father to God the Son. Although the last part of verse 24 is not quoted in our Hebrews passage, it does begin with a change in address. Rather than the Psalmist speaking of God in the third person as he has been doing, a switch is made to the second person singular as we begin to read in the middle of verse 24 on through to the end of the chapter:

24 Your years are throughout all generations. 25 Of old You founded the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands. 26 Even they will perish, but You endure; And all of them will wear out like a garment; Like clothing You will change them and they will be changed. 27 But You are the same, And Your years will not come to an end. 28 The children of Your servants will continue, And their descendants will be established before You.

This is the testimony of the Spirit as these verses are clearly applied to Christ in Hebrews 1:10-12. Psalm 102 speaks then of the victory of Christ who suffered for God's glory and for man's salvation. How did Christ win such victory? He did it by faith. This Psalm reveals both the dependence Christ had upon God to deliver Him, but also of Christ's complete trust and assurance in the promises of God, namely that if Christ would be obedient, He would return to the Father receiving the glory He had with the father prior to His incarnation. This is what Christ meant when He prayed in John 17:4-5;

4 I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do. 5 Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

This is the Psalm that the Holy Spirit so wonderfully applies to Christ and now is presented in part for our consideration of Christ here in Hebrews. What is important for us to note? As we turn back to Hebrews 1:10, the first thing that stands out in my mind is the divine declaration. We have had several of these divine declarations, statements made by God the Father about the Son in this passage. In verse 5, the divine declaration is that Jesus is the Son. In verse 8 the divine declaration is that the Son is in fact God (*"Your throne, O God..."*). And now, in verse 10, the divine declaration, that is God the Father's own testimony about the Son, is that the Son is known as "LORD" and as the LORD

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who laid the foundations of the earth and worked the heavens into existence. Such a statement is either absolute heresy or false teaching, or it is the most glorious of truths. Of course I believe that the Scriptures indicate the latter. But consider well for a moment – according to the Scriptures, who laid the foundation of the earth? Apart from the obvious statement of Genesis 1:1 saying that it was God, look with me also at the following Old Testament passages.

Isaiah 48:13

Surely My hand founded the earth, And My right hand spread out the heavens; When I call to them, they stand together.

Jeremiah 32:17

Ah Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and by Your outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for You,

Zechariah 12:1

The burden of the word of the LORD concerning Israel. Thus declares the LORD who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him,

Psalms 8:1, 3

1 O LORD, our Lord, How majestic is Your name in all the earth, Who have displayed Your splendor above the heavens! 3 When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained...

It is clear that the work of laying the foundations of the earth and stretching out the heavens, works of creation, lie only within the power of the LORD God Himself. Therefore, for God the Father to refer to the Son as the LORD who laid the foundation of the earth is attributing to the Son the very nature and power of God as Creator.

In addition to this, I find this divine declaration of Jesus as LORD significant for another reason. In Luke 2:11, Jesus is called Lord by the angels at His birth. In John 13:13 the Son is called Lord by the disciples. In Romans 1:3-4 Jesus is called Lord by Paul. But here in Hebrews 1:10 there is no greater testimony given than God the Father Himself calling the Son “LORD.” For consider:

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Isaiah 43:11

11 I, even I, am the LORD, And there is no savior besides Me.

Isaiah 44:6

Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: 'I am the first and I am the last, And there is no God besides Me.

Isaiah 45:5

I am the LORD, and there is no other; Besides Me there is no God.

Isaiah 45:21

Declare and set forth your case; Indeed, let them consult together. Who has announced this from of old? Who has long since declared it? Is it not I, the LORD? And there is no other God besides Me, A righteous God and a Savior; There is none except Me.

Isaiah 42:8

I am the LORD, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another

We must rejoice in this divine declaration. The Father has clearly revealed to us that the Son is not another God, but is the same God who created the heavens and the earth in the space of six days and all very good. We must come to grips with the logic being presented to us here: God, who cannot lie (Titus 1:2); and who is but one God and LORD (Deuteronomy 6:4); calls the Son – LORD (Hebrews 1:10); and God (Hebrews 1:8). The Son's reputation is to be known as LORD – the God who created all things.

2. The Son is Eternal (1:11)

According to Hebrews 1:10, when did the Son lay the foundations of the earth? He did it ***“in the beginning.”*** This is a clear reference to Genesis 1:1 and tells us that the Son had to exist prior to time, “the beginning.” Now if the Son existed prior to time, then He existed in eternity. This leads us then to the second of the attributes of the Son given to us in this passage – the Son is eternal.

While this truth may be known to most people, let us remember that all of creation, from the heavens and earth, from angels to animals and even man himself all had their beginnings. And, apart from the angelic hosts and mankind, all of creation will have an end as well. The Son however is uniquely different

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than the creation. The Son is neither created, nor destroyed. It is interesting to me that in the realm of science exists what are called the Laws of Thermodynamics. In our creation series we will hear more about these laws, but the first Law of Thermodynamics states in simple terms that energy can be neither created or destroyed but can only be transferred or transformed from one state to another. This law implies something alarming to the Christian. It implies that energy, an inanimate, impersonal force, is eternal – it is like Christ. So then, either Christ is in fact “all energy” – the source of power for all things, which is possible; or man has simply tried to assign an attribute of God to that which is created. If energy has been created by God, then it is not eternal. For only God has always been, always is and always will be. Creation on the other hand, will perish, it will pass away, as the author of Hebrews notes in verse 11, **“They will perish, but you will remain; and they all will become old like a garment.”**

In 2 Peter 3:10 we read these words about the creation;

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.

By way of application, we must remember the temporary nature of this world and its content. They are just things that will burn up. They will not last. According to the Word of God, beside the Lord Himself, there are only two things that will last forever from this earth – the Word of God and people (either to eternal life and happiness or to eternal judgment and damnation). Everything else in this creation that we might hold dear, consider of sentimental value, invest so much time, energy and effort in order to obtain is only temporary; ultimately disposable; and serves as nothing more than fodder for the fire.

The Son on the other hand, is eternal. The meaning of the word here is that He is permanent. He is our Rock and our Fortress. Notice that verse 11 indicates that this world, this creation was not intended to last. It is like a garment that eventually becomes thread bare and wears out. But who remains? – the Son. He is permanent; He alone is consistent and constant.

This world is not evolving, rather it is running down. Earlier I mentioned the First Law of Thermodynamics, which says that energy is neither created nor destroyed. The Second Law of Thermodynamics says that all things are moving toward increased entropy (meaning disorder). Things are winding down, and falling apart. It takes energy, exercise and effort to keep our bodies in shape, to keep the destructive forces assaulting our bodies from succeeding, but we can

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only hold such forces off for a time and then we die and our bodies will decay. No such forces have any effect or ever have upon the person and purpose of the Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. May we long after the one who alone is eternal, the one who has not and will not see decay, the one who has reserved for us in heaven an inheritance that is imperishable and undefiled, kept for us not by the power and effort of men who would fail, but by the power of God. May the Lord Jesus be your trust; may He be your stay. His reputation as Creator and Eternal ought to elicit praise, thanksgiving and a desire to be drawing ever closer to the one who alone can keep you. Let us look to the One whom the doxology of Jude was written:

Jude 24-25

24 Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, 25 to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

Lord, may we know Your great and awesome reputation as being Creator, but may we be able to say it personally as well, “You are my Creator and I will worship, praise and serve You as such.” Lord, may we also know Your reputation as Eternal. We thank You that You are consistent when we are inconsistent; that You are permanent while we are temporary; that You are constant even when we have long ceased. May each one here find their hope in You, find their rest in You and find their salvation in You. Lord, if there be anyone in this place who is uncertain concerning their knowing Your Son as Creator, as Eternal and as Savior, I pray that You will not let them rest – move them Lord to question – move them Lord to wonder at the offer of eternal life as promised by Your Son; open their spiritual eyes to see the beauty of Jesus; open their spiritual ears to hear the wonderful voice of Jesus – impart to them an awareness of the need to call upon the name of Jesus for salvation. Grant them as well Lord a humble and willing heart to speak to someone in this place, be it the Pastor or an other, of their desire and need to know Christ. Rid the temptation to pride and arrogance thinking this is not important for You have declared this is the day You have made, it is a day of salvation, and we must rejoice and be glad in it. May all be glad of Your salvation as secured by Your Son Jesus Christ for all who trust in and live for Him. Amen.

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Soli Deo Gloria

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