

# † 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."*

Last week we began our look at these final verses of the first chapter of Hebrews. This chapter has as its theme the absolute superiority of Christ over both the Old Testament prophets, who as God's servants, delivered the very words of God to men; and over the angelic hosts, whose position and power most certainly places them in place of awe and respect, but yet whose very being is still that of a creature, still limited and still grossly insignificant when compared to the person and prestige of the Son of God. This Son, who although clearly revealed as a man, is meticulously shown to be much more than simply a man by the author of Hebrews. We have come to see the Son in glorious majesty, presented to us not only another in a long line of incomplete and imperfect prophets, but rather the final and perfect revealer of God's will and purpose for man. Not only this, but the Son is also revealed as being so much better than the angels because of the fact that the Son is none other than God in the flesh.

In light of these truths, the author has shown the superiority of Christ in at least four areas, three of which we have now completed and the fourth which we began last week. The first area in which Christ is revealed as superior to the angels is by His rank in verses 4-5. Our Lord Jesus Christ is called by the Father – Son, a rank or title no angel has ever been given. Second, the Son is shown to be superior to the angels by reverence. In Scripture, no legitimate angel of God ever calls for or is commanded to be worshipped by men. Yet God the Father, in verse 6, commands all the angels to worship and revere the Son. Third, the Son is shown to be superior to the angels in rule. In Hebrews 1:7-9 we learned that only the Son, not the angels, has the true nature or character to rule the universe, the world and men.

All this brought us to Hebrews 1:10-14, where we have come to see the fourth way in which the Son is revealed as superior to the angels and that is by His reputation. In other words, what is the Son's revealed reputation in the Scriptures? What attributes or characteristics are continually associated in the Scriptures with the One who is to be the Son of God? This is such a significant point as there are so many various opinions and groups among the so-called

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religious who struggle with the identity of Jesus Christ as not only the Son of God, but in fact very God Himself. Remember that one of the chief characteristics of a cult is the denial of the deity of Jesus Christ. And sadly enough, there are numerous so-called “Christian” churches that deny or ignore the deity of Christ. It is interesting to note that most groups that deny the deity of Christ also deny the authority and inerrancy of the Word of God – and this they must do, for the Scriptures clearly reveal the glory, the majesty, the splendor, the absolute awesomeness of the Son as none other than God Himself – God in the flesh – Emmanuel – God with us.

But I have digressed. Why is the author of the book of Hebrews so focused and enamored with revealing the deity of the Son? I wish to remind you that the audience to which our author is writing is what we must call the professing church. A professing church is one in which the vast majority of its members profess Jesus Christ as Lord, yet not all necessarily believe in His Lordship, or believe that He alone is Savior and Lord. Within this professing church were apparently many who although professed Jesus as Lord, were subtly and steadily being drawn back into their old ways of thinking and their old ways of living. Prior to their coming to the church of Christ, many of these attenders practiced some forms of worshipping angels. Others were strict adherents to the Law of God and practiced the Old Testament sacrifices, believing they were sufficient to provide a right relationship with God. The author here, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, sets the record straight – angels are not to be worshipped and are only creatures – Jesus is God; the Old Testament and its practices were only shadows and symbols of Something greater to come, that Something is a Someone, whose name is Jesus Christ.

And then, let us not forget the intended application for us. Even before we look at the revealed reputation of the Son as being superior to the reputation of angels, let us not forget that we also attend what must be called the professing church. I know that we are small and that we “think” we know each other’s standing before God, but the truth of the matter is that not all in the professing church are necessarily in the true spiritual church. Just like these first century attenders, there may well be some among us who are subtly and steadily being drawn back to old ways of thinking and old ways of living. The Scripture clearly teach that true conversion to Jesus Christ, knowing Him as Lord and Savior, results in not only a complete change of behavior, but also of the very motivations that are a part of our thoughts and being. In other words, the person who is genuinely regenerate will not simply seek to put on an outward mask of religion, morality and righteousness, but will also desire within to remove sinful,

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earthly and sensual thoughts and see them replace with righteous, heavenly and spiritual ones. And how does one go about replacing the earthly and fleshly thoughts and motivations with heavenly and spiritual ones? I submit to you, the first place to start is with a right understanding of the person and work of Jesus Christ. We must not only know His reputation as God, but must also defend and proclaim this reputation. This is in part what Jesus meant when He said in Matthew 28:19;

***“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations...”***

To make disciples is to make learners of Jesus Christ, to be instruments of God in communicating the reputation – the very attributes and characteristics that makes Jesus so wonderful, so marvelous and so very much God. This is what the author of Hebrew is getting after in our text this morning – the revealing of the true reputation of Jesus Christ as God. Now we have already looked at the first two of five such characteristics, namely that in verse 10 the Son is revealed as having the reputation of being the Creator who *“laid the foundation of the earth”* and who is the one of whom it is said that the *“heavens are the works of [His] hands.”* Search the Scriptures and you will not find such a statement made about any angel. The second characteristic noted is that the Son is revealed in verse 11 as Eternal. Of the Son it is said, *“they will perish, but You remain.”* All of creation, including the angels, had a beginning. Parts of this creation will perish, but only the Eternal One was before, is and will always be.

### **3. The Son is Sovereign (1:12a)**

This brings us then to the next of the final three characteristics of the Son revealed in this passage. Beginning in the first part of verse 12, which is still a quote from Psalm 102:25-27, the sixth Old Testament quotation, we learn the third trait revealing the superior reputation of the Son in the fact that the Son is Sovereign. Look at the text. It reads;

***And like a mantle You will roll them up; like a garment they will also be changed...***

This verse, whose thought we sang in the song *“It is Well...”* shows us the sovereignty of the Son. Notice that it is said of the Son what He **will** do. He will roll creation up like a mantle and change it like a garment. The context of this passage is the Son in relation to creation. The Son not only laid the foundations

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of the earth and work into being the heavens, but is also the one who determines what to do with this creation. Now then, the Being who determines the goal, course and end of all creation and is able to carry such a process out is by definition sovereign. To be sovereign is *to be in complete and total control without any outside help or influence*. No one counsels or directs the Lord in what He is to do. The word “sovereignty,” in connection with God, is a word we use quite frequently in this church. So much so, that many of us may forget that the sovereignty of God is one of the more difficult concepts for the human heart to embrace and submit unto.

Some of you are familiar with Jonathan Edwards. Jonathan Edwards is considered to be the human cause of one of the most incredible times of spiritual awareness in American history. This time period is called the Great Awakening, which took place in the mid 1700’s. During this time, many preachers and philosophers were abandoning the historic teachings of the church with it’s God-centered theology in favor of a more modern and more seemingly relevant man-centered theology. This man-centered theology taught that man, not God was ultimately sovereign. Edwards, in his preaching and writings, sought to correct such false teaching and did so proficiently and profusely, defending the absolute sovereignty or control of God over all things in creation, over the choosing and election of sinners to be saints and seeking to place God and His Word in their rightly place of supremacy in the church. I share all of this because this man, whom God gave to the church to supply her with such a wealth of theological, philosophical and ethical teachings concerning the sovereignty of God did not always embrace this teaching. As a young man, who had been brought up in a Christian home, who was taught Latin, Greek and Hebrew before he was a teen ager, who was highly intelligent and always devout to faith and practice, was said to embrace all the teaching of Scripture except one – the sovereignty of God.

Edwards said, “It used to appear like a horrible doctrine to me.” But, as he was praying and studying the Word one day, asking God for understanding, he read the word of 1 Timothy 1:17 which says,

***Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.***

The Lord spoke to Edwards through this passage of which he said he felt, “*a sense of the glory of the Divine Being...a new sense, quite different from anything*” he had ever experienced. As Edwards began to embrace the sovereignty of God both his personal experience of God and his ministry excelled

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and expanded. My friends, this ought to be our prayer and our desire, that as we come to understand the sovereignty of God, our personal experience of God and our service to God might excel and expand. This is how crucial it is that we come to see Jesus as Sovereign.

The picture of the Son's sovereignty in Hebrews 1:12a shows us clearly the eternal power of the Son and the temporary nature of this creation around us. We actually noted this a bit last week, but this verse shows creation to be nothing more than a mantle or robe, a simple garment that clothes the Son. We are to look at creation and see the power and majesty of the Son as Creator. But we must not worship the creation. For like a garment that we have worn for years and years until thread-bear, creation itself will be worn out and need to be changed. And who determines when creation is worn out? Who determines when all things have run their course and accomplished their purposes? None other than the Son.

During the first half of the tribulation, as God begins to rightly and sovereignly bring His judgment on the earth, Revelation 6:14 indicates that the heavens will be stretched to their limits and then rolled up like a scroll. The stars will fall and crash into the earth. Every island and every mountain will be moved from its place. The world will literally unravel. These things that once appeared so stable and so secure will find themselves in a state of apparent utter chaos. Yet Hebrews 1:12b tells us that Someone will be in control of this chaos – the Son, the Sovereign controller of the universe.

The sad reality is that much of humanity shows the sentiment of the mockers of 2 Peter 3:4, saying that "all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation." Appearances can be deceiving. For what appears to be static and unchanging now, while literally fly apart at some point in the future as 2 Peter 3:10 states,

***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, let us ask of God at least two things –

1. That we might have a vision of the temporal and transitory nature of all the present age and its trappings so that we may redeem each day for the glory of God and order our steps to that end knowing that we are bound for eternity.

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2. That we might have a vision of the awesome controlling (sovereign) power of God in the person of Jesus Christ – that we might, by the grace of God, see the most seemingly chaotic, out of control times come into their God-appointed ends.

May we have greater confidence in God! No angel is ever shown to be sovereign like the Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

#### 4. The Son is Immutable (1:12b)

The fourth characteristic revealing the superior reputation of the Son is found in the last half of verse 12 where we read;

***But You are the same, and Your years will not come to an end.***

Not only is this another reference to the eternal nature of the Son, but it also speaks of His immutability. The term immutability simply speaks of the unchangeable nature of the Son. The Son is unchanging in His purpose, profession, and person. Consider –

- The Son did not become God, but has always been God.
- The Son did not become the Creator, but has always been the Creator.
- The Son did not become Sovereign, but has always been Sovereign.
- The Son will not gain control of this earth in the future, but is in control.

The passage of time may produce wrinkles, sickness and death in humanity – it may allow us to see a person of knowledge and wisdom grow forgetful and senile, but such time has absolutely no effect on the purpose, profession and person of Christ. He is the Ancient of Days and changes not.

Last week we looked at many Old Testament passages that clearly showed that only the LORD God is Creator and Savior. If this be true, then these New Testament passages like Hebrews 1 are either confirming that Jesus is the same Creator and Savior as revealed in the Old Testament, or we have false teachings. But I say to you praise the Lord - for the testimony of the Scriptures is that Jesus is the same God of the Old Testament. And in the Old Testament we see that this threefold idea of Christ's purpose, profession and person being immutable or unchanging is affirmed.

In Isaiah 46:9-10 we see this **purpose**, that is, what God intends to do will be done and that this purpose is immutable or unchanging:

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***Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure.'***

Or we might say, “What God purposes, He brings to pass.”

In Psalm 119:89 we see this **profession**, that is what God says, to be immutable:

***Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven.***

What the LORD says, will certainly and completely be accomplished as is affirmed in the testimony of Isaiah 55:12 saying,

***So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.***

Finally, who the LORD is as a **person** is also immutable – He will not change – as we see in Malachi 3:6,

***For I, the LORD, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.***

Now, in Hebrews 1:12b, God the Father says to God the Son, “*You are the same*” or “You do not change in purpose, profession or person.” The creation which currently clothes the Son will wear out and need to change, but the Son never changes because He is eternal God. Occasionally on Thursday nights, especially during the summer, I will come home after work, having worn slacks and a dress shirt, and change into some shorts and a polo shirt. When I change my clothes and come to Bible Study, do I change who I am? No, I stay or remain the same in my purpose, profession and person. In other words, clothes do not make the man and clothes do not make the Son God.

This will be a continued theme of the author of Hebrews. Most of you are familiar with Hebrews 13:8 which says,

***Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.***

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Whether clothed in creation, in judgment or in glory, Jesus does not change in person, profession or purpose. Jesus has been and always will be immutable, therefore we can know these three things:

1. Jesus is able to save completely, entirely, fully, to the uttermost, those who draw near to God through Him (Hebrews 7:25) – He is Redeemer!

***Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.***

2. Jesus is always to be confidently trusted (Hebrews 6:19-20) – He is our Hope!

***This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil, where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.***

3. Jesus is the awesome God, who is to be worshipped in holiness and given our complete submission and service (Hebrews 13:15) – He is our God!

***Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.***

So then, we have come to see the reputation, that which the Son is to be known and appraised for, as Creator of all things; as Eternal, having always existed, always existing and forever existing; as Sovereign, the One who determines the end and goal of all things; and as Immutable, never changing in person, profession or purpose. We have one more trait to discover which we will save for next week, but let us end with a question, “*Are you merely a professor of such truths, or do such truths actually possess your soul?*” You might ask, “What is the difference?” Beloved, it is not enough to simply know and be able to regurgitate such truths. The measure of one’s standing before God is not upon quantity of knowledge, but is rather upon whether or not that knowledge is effecting true and genuine change in your life. Remember what was said earlier, and may this serve to be the focus of your attention this morning - true

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conversion to Jesus Christ results in not only a complete change of behavior, but also of the very motivations that are a part of our thoughts and being. Not only are your outward behaviors to be changed, but your motivations, your inward thoughts and inclinations are to be taking captive to the obedience of Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5). As we gather now to partake of the Lord's Supper, consider well what areas of your life, particularly your thought life, are not yet in obedience to Christ – confess them, ask for forgiveness and deliverance from such selfishness as to be living for self – call upon the name of the Lord and be saved from such things. Do not be content with being a mere professor of truth, but ask the Lord that you might be a true practitioner of the truth. Many professors of truth will find themselves in the place of eternal torment and torture on the last day – so seek the Lord while He may be found and beseech Him that you might be a living sacrifice for Him.

Amen.

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## *Soli Deo Gloria*

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