

# † 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?*

Believe it or not, we have actually come to close of the first chapter of the book of Hebrews. I know that we have taken a rather detailed look at the descriptions and meanings of these verses. Please understand that we have painstakingly done this because this first chapter sets the meaning and tone for the rest of the book. If we fail to comprehend the author's purpose and intent to build precept upon precept, idea upon idea and fact upon fact regarding the person of the Son, we will not fully appreciate the depth of the teaching regarding the Son throughout the rest of the book. So, like a good novelist or screenwriter, the main character has been well developed so that we might better understand and appreciate the rest that follows.

As of late, we have been studying the reputation of the Son and noting how the Son's reputation exceeds that of the angels. I could wish that you might know the specific traits that depict the superiority of the Son over angels so well that they could be spoken by rote. But, in case they are not, let me quickly restate the first four of five such reputations we have discovered:

1. The Son is Creator (v. 10)
2. The Son is Eternal (v. 11)
3. The Son is Sovereign (v. 12a)
4. The Son is Immutable (v. 12b)

This morning then we come to the very last of these stated traits by which we must come to see the greatness of the Son. In verse 13 we are to see the Son as the Reigning Conqueror as God the Father says to God the Son,

***Sit as my right hand, until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.***

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This statement represents the final of the Old Testament quotations the author appeals to in order to convince his first Jewish readers of the superiority of Christ over angels. This final quotation represents the seventh as well, which seems to indicate that the author chose these seven to represent a complete picture of Christ. The number seven in the Scriptures is the number of perfection or completion – often called the divine number. If this be the case, then the first audience would have well be aware that as the seventh quotation is given, the author is also saying, “Here is the full and complete picture of the Son.”

Now the quote itself is from Psalm 110:1. I would like you to look specifically what Psalm 110:1 says in the Hebrew text –

***The LORD says to my Lord: “Sit at My right hand Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.”***

From our Hebrews 1:13 text, we know that this verse is being spoken by God the Father to God the Son. This is a Messianic Psalm, that is a passage that tells us something about the coming Messiah or Christ. Now the full text in Psalm 110:1 reveals something interesting as well. I want you to note the use of the word “LORD” in this verse. It says, “*The LORD says to my Lord...*” One use of the word LORD is in all caps and the other is not. In the better translations of the Old Testament you will find this varied structure of the word Lord. Whenever you have the all caps LORD, it is using the Hebrew word “Yahweh” – referring to the proper name of God. God’s name is LORD or “Yahweh.” When the Hebrew text has L.o.r.d. it is generally the Hebrew word “adonai” which means master. In the Old Testament, various persons and even false gods are sometimes referred to as “adonai” or master, but never in the Old Testament is anyone other than the true God referred to as LORD or Yahweh.

We see another example of this in Psalm 8:1 where if you note carefully you find the same thing –

***O LORD, our Lord, How majestic is Your name in all the earth, Who have displayed Your splendor above the heavens!***

Here we might properly translate the verse to say, “O Yahweh, our Master, how majestic is Your name in all the earth...” Now, what does this have to do with our Hebrews 1:13 text? Well, we have already noted that God the Father has referred to the Son as LORD or Yahweh in verse 10. Now the first readers are being reminded again that the although Jesus has already been referred to

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as Yahweh, it is still Yahweh, in the person of God the Father, that is speaking to God the Son, who is now described as Master. This word Master might also be translated in context as “Sovereign or Reigning King.” “The LORD says to the Reigning King...” And how does a King reign – by being in control, by defeating his enemies, and this is exactly what we see in the context, that this King has defeated His enemies, taking His seat upon the throne and being readied to utilize His enemies as a footstool for His feet. Here in Psalm 110:1, the Son is portrayed then as the Reigning Conqueror.

But the author of Hebrews does not include this little phrase, “*The LORD said to my Lord...*” This is not because it does not apply to Christ, by context we have already seen and learned of the pure Deity of the Son. But rather, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, our author was determined to emphasize something else. He introduces this quote with the phrase, “*But to which of the angels has He ever said...*” The quote from Psalm 110:1 has never had any reference to any angel at any time in the Scriptures. But there is something else of significance to note – in Psalm 110:1, we read, “*The LORD says (present tense) to my Lord...*” Remember that this Psalm is Messianic, meaning that it was referring to a future time when this would be said to the Messiah – Jesus Christ. Here in Psalm 110:1, the picture is of the day in which God the Father says this to God the Son. But our Hebrews 1:13 passage is a bit different. It does not describe for us the moment in time when God the Father says this to the Son, but rather it tells us that God the Father has already said this. The verb is “*has said*” which is in the perfect tense in the Greek. It means that God the Father has already spoken this in the past and what He has spoken will continue on into the present and the future. In other words, rather than looking forward to Christ reigning as King, Jesus is now reigning as King and will always and forever reign as the Conquering King. Whereas the Old Testament looked forward to the time when this would be spoken, the author of Hebrews tells us it has been spoken and is fixed and certain as a decree of the Almighty God.

What a blessing it is to see the fulfillment of the Word of God. What a blessed assurance we have that what God declares comes to pass! As Psalm 19:7 declares -

***The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.***

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As 1 Thessalonians 5:24 also declares –

***Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.***

Do not miss the significance of what is being communicated here. In a world of broken promises, corruption in the highest levels of government and the tendency towards relativism, the removal of absolute truths, we are presented with the truth of the living God who always keeps His word. All of the promises He has made that are to be already fulfilled, have been fulfilled. This is to give us confidence that the remaining promises of the Word of God will also be fulfilled exactly as God has decreed.

Now, with the quotation of Psalm 110:1, we must note another truth that ought to inspire confidence and certainly reveals the superiority of the Son over angels. What specifically did God the Father say to God the Son in this passage? He says, “*Sit at My right hand...*” Let’s begin with this simple little statement. Obviously, as we have studied, the Father is placing the Son in the highest position of honor and power. We saw this back in Hebrews 1:3. But there is something else to notice. The Father says, “*sit*” which is a present active imperative verb in the Greek. It is a command that says in the effect, “Come to sit and keep on sitting in the place of highest honor!” What we are to learn here then is the idea of permanence. No one, not even an angel of heaven will or can sit at the right hand of God because only the Son has been given this position. Additionally this tells us then that no one will or can usurp the position of the Son, who is forever to sit, to reign and to rule at the right hand of God.

And then by way of reminder, why is it that the Son can sit? He can sit because He has accomplished the work He was sent to do – He has defeated His enemies. This idea will be expanded upon by the author of Hebrews in Chapter 2 and verse 14 where we read;

***14 Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.***

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John, the apostle, make a similar observation in 1 John 3:8 which says,

***...the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.***

In other words, the Son can sit at the right hand of God because He has shown Himself to be the Conquering and Victorious Warrior, who is now bringing all things under His subjection.

Moving on in our text, there is an interesting thought regarding the phrase, “*until I make Your enemies a footstool for your feet...*” This pictures an ancient practice of victorious Kings, even in the Old Testament times, of placing a foot on the neck of the defeated king as the ultimate sign of victory. Let me refer you to an instance of this as seen in Joshua 10:24-25. The scene here is after five Amorite kings conspired together to try to defeat Gibeon, a great city who made a treaty with Israel after the conquests of Jericho and Ai. These kings attacked Gibeon. While under attack, word was sent to Joshua and Israel, who came to save Gibeon and defeated the Amorites utterly, that is to the last man, by having the sun stand still. The five kings hid themselves in a cave where Joshua trapped them. Then we read in Joshua 10:24-25;

***24 When they brought these kings out to Joshua, Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said to the chiefs of the men of war who had gone with him, “Come near, put your feet on the necks of these kings.” So they came near and put their feet on their necks. 25 Joshua then said to them, “Do not fear or be dismayed! Be strong and courageous, for thus the LORD will do to all your enemies with whom you fight.”***

After this, Joshua orders the kings to be struck to death by the sword and their bodies hanged on five trees. Needless to say, to be a footstool of the Reigning Conqueror is not a place to aspire to.

There is an important application for us to glean from all this. For although it may not always appear as such right now, the Son is nonetheless the Reigning Conqueror and is very much in the process of bringing all things under His subjection and rule. Turn with me to 1 Corinthians 15:25-28 where we see this very thing.

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**25 For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. 26 The last enemy that will be abolished is death. 27 For HE HAS PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET. But when He says, “All things are put in subjection,” it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him. 28 When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all.**

Simply put, Christ is the Reigning Conqueror and all His enemies will find their necks eventually under His foot with the subsequent result of their ultimate demise. It bodes all people to well consider that there is only one of two places that you may find yourself in relation to Christ. You may either be held safely and securely in the hands of Jesus as He stated in John 10:28 -

***and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.***

Or you may be held firmly under the foot of Jesus, who, while sitting on His throne, will use your head as His footstool as He pronounces judgment upon you. We read of this in Revelation 20:11-15 –

***11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. 12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. 14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.***

Those who are held safely and securely in the hand of Jesus are those whose lives have been wonderfully and radically changed by Jesus. Have you experience the new birth, the new life, the new heart and mind that the Word says is the experience of all who truly come to Christ in faith, believing He purchase you from sin with His own blood, believing that He alone saves you

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apart from your own merit, and believing that He saves you to make you a new creation. This is the Gospel of the Son of God. This is the privilege of being related to the Reigning Conqueror who “sits at the right hand of God...”

The author of Hebrews has argued that no angel is ever regarded in the Scriptures as having such a reputation and position as of the Son. No angel is ever regarded as –

1. Creator
2. Eternal
3. Sovereign
4. Immutable
5. Reigning Conqueror

Therefore, to sum up this argument, the author asks a rhetorical question in verse 14 which he expects full agreement from his readers –

***Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?***

The best that one can say about the angels is that they are “ministering” or “serving” spirit whose mission in large part is directed to help or support those who inherit salvation – that is mankind.

The word used to describe angels as “ministering” is the Greek word “*leitourgika*” from where we get the word “liturgy.” In church, the liturgy is simply a prescribed form of public worship. The angels are the liturgists, or the ones who actually work for the people to lead them in the worship of God. These *leitourgika* or “ministering ones” refers not really the nature or character of angels but rather is their title or position. Why is it important to note that the angels are being called here by the title of *leitourgika*? I submit to you it is important because the whole of Hebrews chapter 1 has been a series of titles for the Son. The Son’s title is LORD and God – the one to be worshipped and served. The angels have the title of “Ministering Ones” – who worship and serve God. And they serve God by obeying His command to be sent forth or sent out for the service and aid of believers.

The final argument of the author of Hebrews is this – how can it be that those beings whose title is “Ministering Ones” be greater than He who is the Son, who is the Lord, and who is God? Angels are wonderful, marvelous and incredible creatures, but they are nonetheless creatures, who are not to be

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worshipped, not to be prayed to and not to be rendered as a viable substitute to the true worship of the Son.

Now, although I doubt that many of you in here have a problem with the inappropriate worship of angels, let us consider this lesson. We may well have a problem with other things that we have come to worship, other things that occupy our time so that we pray little or less to God, we participate little or less in communion with God. We are creatures of worship – we all worship something, be it self, money, things, science, false gods and the like. Examine the things that occupy your time and your thoughts. May they be God-honoring. If you find things or areas of your life that are not, cast them at the feet of Jesus, ask for forgiveness and pray for the strength to follow the ways of the Savior. Then there will be true joy. Then there will be true worship. Then there will be a true glorifying of God.

Amen.

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## *Soli Deo Gloria*

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