

Heb. 1:4-14 Jesus Is Superior to the Angels (part 3)

I am not sure there is any chapter in the NT that establishes the person and work of Christ than Hebrews 1. Through Him the world was created. He is the radiance of the glory of God, the exact imprint of his nature. He upholds the universe by the word of his power. And concerning his great work of redemption on the cross, we read in v. 3: “**After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.**” And then, for the remainder of cp. 1 the author compares the Son with the angels, showing his superiority to them. And as we’ve seen already, concerning his essence as God, there is no comparison. I can compare one ugly duckling with another beautiful duck and we can find that one is superior to another. But, both ducks still float on the lake, repel water off their backs, and eat pond weed, seeds, and insects. I might even compare my muscles with Caleb Henley’s and find his are superior. However, we are both men who put our pants on the same way.

But, when it comes to the Son of God, particularly in his essence as God, there is no REAL comparison as equals. What may make this comparison necessary is the fact that Jesus was made, according to 2:7, a “**little lower than the angels.**” This is in reference to his incarnation, his “taking on flesh.” As John says, “**the Word became flesh and dwelt among us**” (John 1:14). And as we’ve spoken before, Jesus is fully God . . . AND fully man. His deity and his humanity are united in ONE person. And so that’s what we see in Heb. 1. The author speaks of ONE person. In his incarnation, He was made a “little lower than the angels.” Yet, as we have seen, He is infinitely superior. We saw this in part 1 and 2 of this sermon. Jesus is superior to the angels because of his 1) Unique relationship with the Father, and 2) Because of his infinite worth. Today, we will consider another reason: Jesus is superior to the angels because of the nature of his reign. I have 3 truths about the nature of his reign.

1. His reign is eternal. Now, it is true that from one perspective, the reign of Christ at the majesty of the right hand on high began at his ascension. And this began ONLY after his humiliation . . . his incarnation, his death, his resurrection and then ascension to the right hand of God. I think we have seen that this is the author’s intent. Look at 8:-2: “**Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up.**” He is saying, that the administrations of the old covenant have ended. Jesus is the fulfilment of that system. And the new covenant could not stand unless the Son came down from heaven and fulfilled the great work of mediation between sinful men and Holy God. However, there is more to this truth in v. 8. Why? Because the author says “**your THRONE, O God, is FOREVER and EVER . . .**” What the Son of man did on this earth happened in time. But, from eternity, the THRONE of the Son of God has always existed. These are words reserved for God alone! Turn with me to Ps. 45 as we consider the context.

This Psalm is written by the Sons of Korah who are addressing the king. V. 1: “**My heart overflows with a pleasing theme; I address my verses to the king . . .**” In that context, it is the king of Israel. Also, this Psalm is seen by Jewish scholars as one that looks forward to the Messiah. And NOW, the writer of Hebrews shows its ultimate fulfillment in the Messiah, who is the eternal Son of God. Look at vv. 2-3: “**You are the most handsome of the sons of men;**

grace is poured upon your lips; therefore God has blessed you forever. 3 Gird your sword on your thigh, O mighty one, in your splendor and majesty!” V. 6: **“Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness . . .”** (we will come back to this one in a moment.) Look down at vv. 16-17: **“In place of your fathers shall be your sons; you will make them princes in all the earth. 17 I will cause your name to be remembered in all generations; therefore nations will praise you forever and ever.”**

Brothers and sisters, the kings of Israel (David, Solomon, Uzziah, Josiah, etc.), have all come and gone. But ONLY of the Son can these words be fulfilled. His throne is eternal; for He is eternal! The angels are not so! Yes, they are great in majesty and splendor, and their responsibilities are immense and glorious. Look at v. 7: **“He makes his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire.”** But they are creatures. They are ministers. Look at v. 14: **“Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?”** They are bound by time and bound by the ONE who created them. But, He is the Son, HIS is the throne! In their nature, they are but “winds” and a “flame,” He is the ONE who commands them! They are not eternal! But the Son is eternal! Look at 1:12: **“But you are the same, and your years will have no end.”**

Is. 9:7 **“Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore.”** Dan. 7:13-14: **“I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.”** Even on the new earth we read in Rev. 22:1: **“Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb”**

2. His reign is immutable. This means it cannot change. This truth merely follows eternity. If the nature of his reign is eternal, then the nature of his reign is unchangeable. In Heb. 1, the author is comparing the fact that angels and creation are subject to change. But it is not so with the Son. Look at vv. 10-12: **“You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands; 11 they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment, 12 like a robe you will roll them up, like a garment they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will have no end.”** Again, the author is quoting the Old Testament. Look with me to Ps. 102. Here we see a man who is greatly afflicted. His heart is faint. And He pours out his heart before the Lord. In v. 1: **“Hear my prayer, O Lord; let my cry come to you! 2 Do not hide your fact from me in the day of my distress! . . . v. 3 For my days pass away like smoke, and my bones burn like a furnace. 4 My heart is struck down like grass and has withered . . . v. 5 Because of my loud groaning my bones cling to my flesh . . . v. 11 My days are like an evening shadow; I wither away like grass . . .”**

Here we see a man who knows great affliction. And, he knows his days are numbered. Circumstances one day are the not the same as the next. And he FEELS this truth. It is so bad

that he says in v. 23: **“He has broken my strength in mid-course; he has shortened my days . . .”** And in v. 24: **“O my God, I say, take me not away in the midst of my days—you whose years endure throughout all generations!”** And then . . . He contemplates the eternal unchanging God. In v. 12 he says, **“But you, O Lord, are enthroned forever . . .”** And then down in 25-27: **“Of old you laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. 28 They will perish, but you will remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will change them like a robe, and they will pass away, 27 but you are the same, and your years have no end.”** Here, the author shows the fulfillment of this Psalm in the Son. He is saying, *“creation will change, the angels will change, we will change,”* but the nature of Christ’s reign is unchanging. As James says of God, so we say of Christ, **“there is no variation or shadow due to change”** (James 1:17).

Let’s consider for a moment this world. I am almost finished with a book by Winston Churchill called *The History of the English Speaking Peoples*. And I am amazed at the changes over the past 2000 years just with the island of Britain. Languages have changed, systems of government have changed, those who are in control have changed, levels of wealth in society have changed. Enemies have become friends. Friends have become enemies. And the same has been happening all over the world with every people, nation, tribe, and nation. Think about the changes in your own life. Kids, every year as you grow, there are so many changes. You are taller. Your family moves houses. You get new furniture. You rearrange your room. You get new friends. Your hairstyle has changed. (And we thought some of those styles were gone for good.) Mama and daddy are getting older. You move to a new school.

Also, think about the changes in our lives caused by tragedies, the death of a loved one, a major sickness (I can’t imagine our sister Diana as the Lord has taken Lee home.) And think about our universe. It is constantly changing, constantly moving. Stars, planets, meteors, galaxies, solar systems, ALL are moving rapidly through space. On and on we could go. And, we do not know what change will come tomorrow in our lives, much less the greater world around us. **OUR THRONES ARE ALWAYS CHANGING** because our nature is one of change. But, of the Son, he says, **“Your throne, O God, is forever and ever . . . You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment, like robe you will roll them up, like a garment they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will have no end.”**

This means that **ONLY** in Christ do you have a sure foundation. He is the anchor for your soul. For those who trust in Him, though the winds and the rains and the storms of life beat against us, our **ROCK** will stand! He is eternal! He does not change! This means we cannot put our hopes or our trust in the things of this world. Today, when great change is happening in our culture, Christ does not change! **Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his Anointed . . . But, He who sits in the heavens laughs and says, “As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.”** (Psalm 2)

Application: It is good to take care of this world. For God has given us this mandate (Gen. 1:26-28). However, we know that this world is only temporary. No matter what we do, this world will

change. And one day, there will be a new one. This sinful world does not know this truth. They think this is all there is! So, we can be more sympathetic towards those who put so much effort into preserving this world. After all, it's all they have. It is our job to take care of it, but not to preserve it. At the same time, how should we live our lives. 2 Pet. 3: says to us: **“But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. 11 Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, 12 waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! 13 But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.”**

3. His reign is righteous. Look at vv. 8-9: **“The scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom. 9 You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.”** Here we see Christ carrying a scepter (staff) of righteousness. This pictures his reign. I think back to the patriarch Jacob. Right before he died, he gathered his sons and made prophesies over them. Do you remember what he said to Judah? Gen. 49:10 **“The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.”** He looks forward to the Messiah that would come through the tribe of Judah. And how does he rule? In righteousness. It is who He is! And, because it is WHO He is, it is in his heart. V. 9: **“You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness.”** There is so much I could say here. But, I want to end with WHY this is so important to us.

Do you remember what Isaiah saw in his vision of the throne room of God? In Is. 6:1-5 we read: **“In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!” And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said: “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!”** When we come to the NT, the Apostle John says **“Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him”** (John 12:41).

Brothers and sisters, there is ONLY ONE King whose reign is completely righteous. Even the best of the kings of this world are sinners; ONLY ONE is not! This is the Lord Jesus. In our context, the good angels have not sinned. But ONLY the Lord Jesus is “holy, holy, holy.” And this truth is so important as we consider the good news of the gospel? How? Why is this so? I think of 2 Cor. 5:21: **“For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”** Is. 53:9-11: **“And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was**

no deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. Out of the anguish of his soul shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.” This is the good news of the gospel. He is the ONLY ONE who could accomplish the plan of God to redeem a sinful world and make all things new. It is his righteousness, particularly his “sinlessness” that makes the cross acceptable. Phil 2:6-8: **“though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”**

And after he died, what did he do? He rose again. And then, He ascended to his rightful place back to heaven from where he came, where He reigns as King at the right hand of the majesty on high. This is the point of the author of Hebrews. And this truth sets up the rest of the book. Now, we have such a high priest, who sits in the heavens. And . . . if you are in Christ, if you have believed in him, you sit with him in the heaven. Which king of this earth ever lets his subjects sit on his throne with him? The Bible says we are “united with him.” And this is through the Holy Spirit, whom He gives to his subjects. And the Holy Spirit “washes” us “changes” us, gives us “new life.” This is union with Christ . . . who is ETERNAL, IMMUTABLE, and RIGHTEOUS. This means we will have ETERNAL life. This means our position in him cannot change (No one will snatch us from his hand). And, IN HIM we are justified; we are clothed with his righteousness. And our standing before God is eternally secure.

What is our response?

1. We are creatures under his authority! We depend on him for everything.
2. Our response is worship!
3. Our response is obedience from the heart!