

Hebrews 1:3-14
(Daniel 7:13-14)
“God’s Majestic Son” II

Introduction

Last week we began to study this book that was written to Christians who had faced persecution when they first came to faith in Christ and who now, in the face of further pressure, are being tempted to turn back from following Christ.

In the opening verses, the author presents Jesus Christ as answering the three great questions that strike at the heart of whether our lives have any ultimate meaning at all: First, is there a God, and if so, who is this God and what does he expect of me? Second, what must I do to be reconciled to this God from whom I am alienated through my rebellion and pride? And third, who has the wisdom to show me the way of life, and the power to lead me through this life and into the life to come? In the language of the Bible, I need a prophet, a priest and a king.

The opening verses of Hebrews answer all three questions, calling us to look to Jesus as our prophet, who shows us who God is and who we were meant to be as people created in God’s image. We are also called to look to Jesus as our great high priest, who in his life and death made purification for sin, so that we can be reconciled to God and live at peace with him, assured of his fatherly love for us. This morning, we will focus on those verses that portray Jesus as the one worthy of our worship and glad obedience, for he has been given the seat of honor at God’s right hand and now rules and reigns with the Majesty on high.

Too often, under the influence of our culture, we reduce Jesus in our thinking from our friend to our pal, from our older brother to our twin, from our Lord and Master to our peer. In these verses, we are reminded that Jesus is the high king of heaven and earth, that the day is coming when his glory will be revealed, and “every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:10-11).

If we understand and absorb this text into our minds and hearts, it should make us more engaged and attentive in our worship, as those who have caught a glimpse of the glory of the one we worship; it should make us more engaged and attentive in our lives, as those who realize the majesty and power of the one we serve; and it should make us more confident and joyful in everything, as those who have glimpsed in Jesus our own future as well.

Look with me this morning at four aspects of the glory and majesty of King Jesus displayed in these verses:

Body

1. Jesus bears the *name* of the king of heaven and earth (1:4-5).

In contrast to the angels, whose names testify to God's greatness (e.g., Gabriel means "God is great" and Michael means "Who is like God?"), God has said to Jesus, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you."

Now, this raises an interesting question: What is meant by the word "today"? What is meant in the previous verse (v.4) by the words, "having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs"? Was Jesus merely a man who by the power of a perfect life *became* God's Son? Scripture must be permitted to interpret itself, and when you place these verses alongside others, it becomes clear that what the author intended was to refer to the self-emptying that took place in the Son of God becoming a human being. He became for a while, "a little lower than the angels," but in his resurrection and ascension, he resumed his throne "at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs."

It is in this same sense that we must understand the words the words, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you." God has already pronounced those words at Jesus' baptism, and again on the Mount of Transfiguration, but now, as the Son returns triumphant to resume his place of glory, it is with even greater splendor and majesty, because he has triumphed over sin and death, and returned bearing glorified humanity in his own person. He has, if we dare use such words, become something he was not before: the God-man, God incarnate, God in human flesh. The Father, as it were, welcomes him in the presence of the worshiping angels with the words, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you."

2. Jesus bears the *dignity* of the king of heaven and earth (1:6-9).

The angels are created beings, spirit-beings who offer worship and service night and day to the God who made them. Cherubim and seraphim veil their faces before the throne and cry "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come" (Rev 4:8). We see them serve as messengers to Mary and Joseph, predicting the birth of Jesus, to the Shepherds announcing the birth, and ministering to Jesus during his earthly ministry. They are so glorious that those who see them are terrified.

But the Son receives their worship. He is the very one whom they were created to serve. We see him enthroned at the "right hand of the majesty on high." All heaven and earth owe him allegiance; all should bring him honor and praise.

3. Jesus bears the *power* of the king of heaven and earth (1:10-12).

The angels are merely creatures, as you and I are creatures, and have nothing that has not been given.

But the Son is the very One through whom the universe was spoken into being. "You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands; they will perish, but you remain." The author of Hebrews is identifying Jesus with the Creator God, in the same way that John in his gospel begins with the words, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made, and without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life and that life was the light of men."

4. Jesus bears the *destiny* of the king of heaven and earth (1:13-14).

The angels will forever be "ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation."

But to the Son, God said, "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." Again, the emphasis is on his dignity, power, majesty, and authority. He will reign forever and ever.

Conclusion

Now you may be wondering exactly how this applies to you. But consider this, the surpassing wonder of God's promise to all of us who are joined to Christ through this great salvation: *we will not become angels*. We don't, as Hollywood would have it, "get our wings" when we die. *We rather receive the inheritance of the children of God*. We, together with Jesus, our Savior and Lord, become heirs of our heavenly Father, the high king of heaven and earth. Even now it may be said of us:

We bear a *name* superior to that of the angels: we are "sons and daughters of God."

Our *dignity* is greater than that of the angels, for though we were created "a little lower than the angels," in Christ we are "crowned w/ glory and honor."

Our *power* is not merely that of the angels, but rather we have received "the Spirit of God."

And our *destiny* is superior to that of the angels, who remain forever "ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation (v.14), but we

will rule and reign with Christ, a “royal priesthood,” who will actually “judge angels.”

This is not academic, this is not mere religious talk unrelated to life. This is your destiny, if you are in Christ. No matter how small your life may seem today, how ever dim your prospects, if you are God’s child, then he is preparing you for nothing less than the glorious destiny of taking your seat one day at Jesus’ right hand, of sharing in his glorious rule. As Jesus himself has promised, he has gone to prepare a place for us, and will return at last to take us to be with him forever.

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