

SERMON GUIDE

Hebrews: The Preeminence of Christ Over All

Hebrews 1:4-14



5.5.2024

SERMON NOTES:

Here at The Journey Church, we place a high value on theology and the Word of God. That's why we preach expositional sermons. Because we believe that the best way to disciple believers into mature Christians is through the teaching and application of the Bible. If you walk out into our lobby, you will see a wall with our values listed on it. One of those values is "Gospel Rich Theology." We have a clear and open commitment to teaching you the Word of God and educating you theologically. This is why we have midweek classes every semester. This is why your kids aren't down the hall coloring in funny pictures but they're learning serious doctrine about the Trinity, the hypostatic union, and the inerrancy of Scripture.

Our church loves theology. But there is one category of theology that almost no one ever talks about: Angelology (the study of angels). Angels don't take a very prominent position in the world of theology. When you consider things like the sovereignty of God seen in every book of the Bible, the incarnation of God into a human body, and the unfolding story of God redeeming his people, there isn't a lot of room left for angels. But the writer of Hebrews brings angels up within the first three sentences of his letter. This was a very important topic for him to cover.

We have a much lower view of angels than the Jews did. Many scholars believe that the reason angels are addressed in this letter is because the Jews were actually worshipping angels. Some Jews, as we will see in our text, thought of Jesus as equal to the angels because he was a created spiritual being just like them. Not only did the Jews have a high view of angels, but the text speaks highly of them too. Hebrews 2:9 says that when Christ was incarnated, he was "for a little while made lower than the angels." The angels have special ministerial works assigned to them by God. They are often referred to as "sons of God" throughout the Bible. They are ministers sent by God to carry out special tasks given to them:

1. God sent angels into Sodom and Gomorrah, and when the men of the city sought to attack the angels, he destroyed the entire city and killed everyone in it.
2. In 2 Kings 19, the Assyrians are closing in on Judah to capture the land. King Hezekiah pleads for the Lord to deliver Judah from their enemies. Overnight, God sends the angel of the Lord to slaughter 185,000 Assyrian troops. When the Assyrian king woke up in the morning he fled away to Nineveh.
3. In Revelation 22, John fell down at the feet of the angel who gave him his vision of the new heavens and new earth to worship him. This is the same response we see from almost everyone who encounters an angel in Scripture. They cower before them and the angel says, "do not be afraid."

Angels are marvelous and fear-inducing creatures. I would recommend that you stay away from all the YouTube and TikTok accounts that give you “biblically accurate angels” – but we do know without a doubt that they are marvelous and fearful-looking creatures. While we may not talk much about them, Scripture certainly speaks highly of them. I tell you all of that because it is essential to understanding our text. The whole underlying point of Hebrews 1:4-14 is that yes, the angels are marvelous creatures, but Christ is still preeminent over them. That is why I’ve titled this sermon “The Preeminence of Christ Over All.”

Christ is the preeminent one because of his divine Sonship. The two biggest takeaways from this text are the Son’s supremacy over the angels and the Father’s divine love of the Son.

EXEGESIS:

VS 4 -- Having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

Not only did some Jews worship the angels, but some of them also believed that the Law was given by angels. As soon as the writer introduces the letter with the supremacy of the Son, he immediately goes into his defense. His first defense is to show Christ as supreme over the creatures that the Jews held in such high esteem. The angels must be reduced to their proper place so as to not overshadow Christ. Christ has become superior to them. The reason he says “become” is because, as I quoted earlier, for a moment he was made lower than the angels on the earth. But now the Father has exalted him and given him the name that is above every name. What is this name he has inherited? That’s what he turns to in the next verse:

VS 5 -- For to which of the angels did God ever say, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you”? Or again, “I will be to him a father and he shall be to me a son”?

The name that Christ has inherited is the Son of God. Most of the time when the NT refers to God without designating a particular person of the Trinity, it is referring to the Father. The Father never said to any angel “you are my Son.” While the angels are often referred to in a general sense as the “sons of God” – no angel was ever given the intimate title of “Son of God.” God has never assigned divine Sonship to the angels. This title has only ever been assigned to the one true Son of God.

The Father says that the Son is begotten of him. This is a massively important phrase. There is so much theology wrapped up in that one phrase that we could give an entire lecture just on this doctrine. In fact, I have. The doctrine refers to eternal generation. The Son is from the Father and is sent by the Father to accomplish the Father’s will, not his own. So, when the Father says that he has begotten the Son, he’s talking about sending him to the earth for one, but this is also representative of the eternal relationship within God. The Son is not just begotten when he is born, he is eternally the Son, and he is eternally begotten. When the Father sends the Son to the earth, he is begotten in time and space, but that act in the incarnation is also a mirror of the eternal relationship within the Father and Son.

This eternal relationship is seen in the next quote from 2 Samuel 7:14. I will be to him a father and he shall be to me a son. This is what we call the intratrinitarian relationship. Trinity – Father, Son, and Spirit. Intra not inter because we aren't talking about three individuals. We are talking about distinct persons, but we are not talking about a relationship between different individuals. We use the word intra because we are talking about a relationship within God that is three persons. Now, if that is a lot to wrap your head around, look with me at the next verse because it helps us understand it.

VS 6 -- *And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him."*

The Father sends the Son into the world as the firstborn. This is an outplaying of eternal generation. The Son generates from the Father to earth as the firstborn. Now that phrase firstborn is something our Jehovah's Witness friends love to use against us. Oftentimes they will take a verse like **Colossians 1:15 -- *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation*** - to say that Christ was the first one born, as in the first one created. But the word firstborn isn't talking about Christ as a created being, it is referring to his prominence over all. Christ is unique as the firstborn Son who is superior to the angels (v.4).

That preeminence is confirmed in the quote from **Deuteronomy 32:43 -- *Let all God's angels worship him***. The angels worship Christ, he doesn't worship them, and neither should man. What's really interesting is that the original context of Deuteronomy 32 is referring to YHWH (God as one) – Hebrews applies the theology of it specifically to the Son.

Pastor Erik talked last week about how the aim of the New Testament is to elevate the Son. Let me give you some texts that display that:

John 5:22-23 – *22 For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, 23 that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father.*

Luke 2 -- The angels worship the Son at his birth singing "*Glory to God in the highest*"

Rom. 8:29 -- *For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.*

Revelation 4 -- Angels worshipping God in the throne room.

The writer sets Christ as the firstborn over and against the angels. He does this by saying that we shouldn't worship angels because they worship Christ, and the angels actually have their own role to play in the work of God:

VS 7 -- Of the angels he says, "He makes his angel winds, and his ministers a flame of fire."

Angels were created to be ministers of God. John Frame has done an excellent job of mapping out a threefold ministry of angels. Angels are:

1. **Messengers of God's Word.** They bring messages of judgment, as in Sodom and Gamora. They bring messages of provision, as when Gabriel spoke to Mary.
2. **Carry out God's will.** That's what Hebrews is referring to here when he says he makes his ministers a flame of fire. (Theophany)
3. **Ministers to God and his people.** After Jesus faces temptation in the desert, angels come to minister to him. When Jesus prayed in Gethsemane, angels came to strengthen him. Angels also minister to God's people, which we will look at later on.

In our next verse, the writer contrasts the angels against the Son:

VS 8-9 -- 8 But of the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, 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."

The throne of the Son is eternal. His reign is forever and ever. The angels serve the King as they are commanded. The writer uses the word scepter to talk about Christ's Kingdom. A scepter is a staff that is a symbol of a king's leadership and authority. The writer says that Christ's uprightness is the symbol of his Kingdom. He has a Kingdom marked by righteousness. He loves righteousness. He was fully obedient to the Law in righteousness. He was the one who fulfilled and completed the Law.

His Kingdom is set around loving righteousness. Alongside his loving righteousness, he also hates wickedness. Christ-hating wickedness is not some secondary byproduct of his righteousness. It's not as though he loves righteousness so therefore, he just has to hate wickedness. He naturally hates wickedness because it is opposed to everything he is. Yes, Jesus is a sweet loving lamb who was led to be slaughtered. He is also a roaring lion who rules and runs the world. In a world screaming "He Gets Us" let's be a church that says no, He saves us, and you better hope he doesn't get you. As a result of his love of righteousness and hatred of wickedness, the Father has anointed him above the many sons he is bringing to glory (2:10).

Both of these verses clearly refer to Christ as God. **"Your throne, O God,"** is an obvious reference to Christ as God seated on the throne. In verse 9 he says God (Son) your God (Father) is the one who has anointed you. The writer repeats it so many times that you cannot honestly read this text and walk away saying that Christ isn't God. What the writer does next is explain Christ's work as God.

VS 10-12 -- 10 And "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.”

Hebrews identifies three of the Son’s divine attributes:

1. **The Son is Creator.** Creation is a complete work of God. God alone created the world and everything in it. He did not bring it forth through evolution or constitute it from anything that already existed. He created all things out of nothing. **Colossians 1:16 – For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things were created through him and for him.** God created the world through the Son. The Father decreed what would be and the Son was the one who actually brought it about. He’s who fashioned everything together. **Job 38:6-7 – On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?** FF Bruce says the angels were merely worshiping spectators to God’s glory in creation.
2. **The Son is eternal.** This is where we see the Creator-creature distinction. Christ is what we are not. He is what the angels are not. Everything except God is created, therefore he alone is eternal, distinct, and preeminent over all. Heaven and earth will pass away, but the Kingdom of the Lord will reign forever.
3. **The Son is immutable.** Meaning that he is unchanging. **Hebrews 13:8 – Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.** He is and will always be the unchanging eternal God who created all things.

The writer concludes this section with the same question he began with:

VS 13-14 -- 13 And 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 serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?

God hasn’t brought the angels to his side. There is only one who sits at the right hand of the Father. The Son has been exalted to the right hand of the Father as he subjects all things to himself. This will continue to happen until every knee bows, in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue confesses Christ is Lord. God sets his enemies as a footstool under his feet. **Psalm 2:4 -- He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision.** God laughs at his enemies while they swear against him. He is absolutely sovereign over them. He will defeat all of his enemies. There will be a day when the enemies of God are faced before him, and they cannot stop their tongues from confessing Christ is Lord.

But God also defeats his enemies every time he regenerates a dead heart. All men will bow to God, and some men will do it joyfully. This is what he refers to in verse 14. The angels are ministering spirits sent out to serve the enemies of God who have been made friends of God. They serve those who are

to inherit salvation. The Father sent Christ to become lower than the angels for a little while. In that time, he spent his own blood to purchase the Church. He has obtained the church with his own blood. After making purification for sins, he was exalted to the throne room and took his rightful place as the preeminent one at the right hand of the Father. He sits there now holding all things together by the word of his power. Watching as men rebel against him. He intercedes on behalf of the saints and watches as his enemies are made a footstool under his feet. He sits on his throne as the Spirit proceeds from him to open the eyes of the men and women that he purchased as his own. All of those saints gather together to worship him because they are adopted as co-heirs beside the Son who is the firstborn among many brothers. In that adoption, you gain the legal rights to your eternal inheritance. Christ is the preeminent King over all because of his divine Sonship, and we ought to worship him as such.



- How was your week? What is one thing you're grateful for and one thing that challenged you?
- How did you GROW in obedience to Christ over the last week?
- Where did you GO to share the gospel or have a spiritual conversation with someone?



- **REVIEW:**
 - Read **Hebrews 1:4-14** and then have someone else in the group read it again, preferably from a different version.
 - What big takeaways did you have from the teaching?
 - Additional Scripture:
 - Colossians 1:16
 - John 1:3
 - John 3:16
 - Psalm 2:7
 - Psalm 95:6
 - Isaiah 25:1
 - Psalm 91:11
 - Psalm 34:7
 - 2 Corinthians 5:21
 - Philippians 3:9
 - Proverbs 10:2

- James 1:21
- John 1:3
- John 1:1
- Hebrews 13:8

● **REFLECT:**

- What does it mean that Jesus is “much superior to angels”?
- What does it mean that Jesus is “begotten”?
- Why should the angels worship Jesus?
- What were the angels created for according to John Frame? Discuss each one.
- How does Jesus love righteousness and hate wickedness?
- Discuss the three divine attributes of Jesus.

● **RESPOND:**

- What does it mean to inherit salvation?
- What are we to do with that inheritance?

● **MEDITATE:**

- Hebrews 1:8-9 -- *8 But of the Son he says, “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, 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.”*

● **MEMORIZE:**

- Colossians 1:16 -- *For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.*



- **FOLLOW:** How will you follow Jesus this week and grow in your love and understanding of Him?
- **FISH:** Who in your sphere of influence needs to hear this story, your story or the gospel?
- **PRAYER:**
 - Pray over any request from your group members.
 - Mobilization Pastor - **Shawn Casto**
 - Ministry - **Relengage**
 - **Pray for our long-term units on the field:**
 - The Wilsons
 - The Grays
 - The Starks
 - **Pray for our mid-term sent ones on the field:**
 - Kaesi
 - Ethan & Dustin (May 16 - June 30)

- **Pray for our short-term teams:**
 - Asian Pacific Rim Team - on the field
 - Southeast Asia Team #2 departing on June 15
 - London Team departing June 30
 - Central Asia Team #2 departing on September 27
- **Pray for the lost - Unreached People Group (UPG):** Odienne Jula in Côte d'Ivoire



- **Population in Country:** 169,000
- **Global Population:** 169,000
- **Christian Adherent:** 0.00%
- **Evangelical:** 0.00%
- **Primary Religion:** Islam
- **Primary Language:** Wojenaka
- **Summary:** The Jula (or Dyula) people are skilled craftsmen and merchants. The Jula are in subgroups, one of which is the Odienne, the name of a town in northwestern Cote d'Ivoire with its own airport. This has long been a trading center.
- **Prayer Focus:** As far as we know, there are no followers of Christ among the Odienne Jula people. Pray this would soon change and many will become Christ's disciples. Pray for believers to go as his ambassadors to the Odienne Jula people of Cote d 'Ivoire. Pray for the Lord to give the gift of faith to many within this people group. Pray for spiritual awakening in their homes, villages and even in their mosques.
- Want to keep up with other Unreached People Groups? Download the Unreached of the Day App <https://joshuaproject.net/pray/unreachedoftheday/app>