

THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

Hebrews: The Supremacy of Jesus

Lesson One: “Jesus’s Supremacy Over All Things”
(Heb. 1:1-14)

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Outline

Introduction:

Part One: Jesus: Better Than the Prophets (1:1-3).

Part Two: Jesus: Better Than the Angels (1:4-14).

Discussion

Application

Introduction

- Author: Unknown.
 - We do know the author was associated with Paul and his group.
 - Origin said, “God knows the truth of the matter.”
 - Candidates include:
 - Paul (70 %)
 - Barnabas (80 %)
 - Luke (80 %)
 - Apollos (77 %)
 - Timothy (80 %)
 - Joseph of Arimathea/Nicodemus/Some other Priest who converted (65 %)
 - Clement of Rome (55 %)
 - Priscilla (30 %)
 - Aquilla (30 %)



How Did a Book Meet Canonicity Standards?

- ***Apostolicity*** (Had to be penned, linked to, or authorized by an apostle)
 - While the author was unknown, Hebrews was linked to Paul and his colleagues.
- ***Authority*** (Had to include the power of God)
 - Were people transformed by the message brought in the text?
- ***Antiquity*** (Had to be old enough to have had eyewitness testimony)
 - Hebrews was written before the persecution of Rome, suggesting a date of around 64 AD.
- ***Authenticity*** (Had to contain the authentic message of Jesus)
 - The book contains deep and thorough orthodox teachings.
- ***Acceptability*** (Had to have been accepted by the majority of the church)
 - There were several early canons which included the majority of the books that we have in the NT, and some that we do not.

Early Canons

- **Muratorian Fragment (AD 170-200):**
 - All the books except Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, and 3 John.
- **Origen of Alexandria (AD 215-250):**
 - Questions only 2 Peter, 2 John, and 3 John. Notes that the author of Hebrews is unknown but should be accepted.
 - In a commentary on the Gospel of John, Origen mentions all the books of the NT (c. AD 250).
- **Eusebius of Caesarea (c. AD 311):**
 - Mentions all the NT books, but notes that some dispute James, Jude, 2 Peter, 2 John, and 3 John, but were accepted by the majority of the church as authentic.
- **Cyril of Jerusalem (c. AD 350):**
 - Prominent Christian leader mentions all of the NT books as authentic, except for Revelation. Lambasts the Gospel of Thomas as a heretical book
- **Athanasius of Alexandria (AD 367):**
 - Mentions all 27 NT books as canonical.
- **Nicene Council, in AD 325, officially accepted the 27 books of the NT as authorized and inspired by God.**
 - As Dr. Leo Percer said, “The Nicene Council did not create the list of canonized books, they recognized which books were already known to have been inspired.”
- Why were these NT books questioned? Mainly because of their authorship.
- After investigation, the questioned books were accepted fully by the council.

Date

- C. AD 64 before Nero's intense persecution of Christians in Rome, only a few had been martyred up to this point (Heb. 10:32-39; 12:4).

Purpose

- Written to Jewish Christians living in a metropolitan area.
- Candidates: Jerusalem, Alexandria, or Rome.
 - Rome, the most likely candidate.
- The writer was very knowledgeable of the OT priesthood.
- The Greek text is extremely rich, elegant, and “highly literate,” indicating that the author was highly educated, and scholarly in his (or her) knowledge of the OT.
- For this reason, many have suggested that Dr. Luke, the writer of the Gospel and Acts, wrote this book.

Look for the Following:

- See how God spoke partially through the prophets, and fully through Jesus.
- See how Jesus is superior than the angels due to his status, thus discrediting any attempt to worship angels.
- God sends his angels to protect and keep his children.



**PART ONE:
JESUS: BETTER
THAN THE
PROPHETS
(1:1-3).**

THE SUPERIORITY OF JESUS'S REVELATION (1:1-2A).

- “God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son”

THE SUPERIORITY OF JESUS'S REVELATION (1:1-2A).

- Writer says 3 things about God's revelation:
 - 1) God has spoken.
 - 2) God spoke to the Jewish "fathers" (1:1).
 - 3) God spoke through the prophets.
- What is *progressive revelation*?
- Jesus, the fullness of God's revelation.

Application

Jesus is the fullness of God's revelation.

God's revelation is progressive in nature.

God may not give us all the details.

The OT and NT are both extremely important: You need the OT to understand the NT.

THE SUPERIORITY OF JESUS'S CREATION (1:2B-3).

- “whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; 3 who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high”

THE SUPERIORITY OF JESUS'S CREATION (1:2B-3).

- Focus on the creational authority possessed by Jesus.
- 7 Phrases showing Jesus's relationship with creation and God the Father:

Relationship to Creation

- 1) Christ is “heir of all things” (1:2) indicating that he will have ultimate authority over all creation.
- 2) Christ is the means through which God “made the universe” (1:2). The Son was the mediator used in creating the universe.
 - Paul also states, quoting an early, pre-NT formulation, “For everything was created by him, in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through him and for him” (Col. 1:16).

Relationship to the Father

- 3) Christ is also the “radiance of God’s glory” (1:3) which means that God shines his light through Christ, which he uses to shine in human hearts (see also Jn. 1:9).
- 4) Christ is also the “exact expression of his nature” (1:3). This means that Christ holds the same essence of God. He is not just a human being, he is God.

Relationship to the World

- 5) Christ sustains “all things by his powerful word” (1:3). Being that he is God, he holds all things together by his word.

Relationship to Redemption

- 6) Christ made “purification for sins” (1:3) meaning that he provided the means by which we can be saved.
- 7) Christ “sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high” (1:3).

Application

- Christ is the ultimate prophet. We can believe what he says.
- Christ is the ultimate priest. We can trust what he's done.
- Christ is the ultimate conqueror. We can trust what he will do.



PART TWO: JESUS: BETTER THAN THE ANGELS (1:4-14).

JESUS IS SUPERIOR TO THE ANGELS IN REGARD TO HIS RELATIONSHIP (1:4-7).

- 4 “having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.
- The Son Exalted Above Angels
- 5 For to which of the angels did He ever say:
 - “You are My Son,
 - Today I have begotten You”?
- And again:
 - “I will be to Him a Father,
 - And He shall be to Me a Son”?
- 6 But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says:
 - “Let all the angels of God worship Him.”
- 7 And of the angels He says:
 - “Who makes His angels spirits
 - And His ministers a flame of fire.”

JESUS IS SUPERIOR TO THE ANGELS IN REGARD TO HIS RELATIONSHIP (1:4-7).

- The author then shows how Jesus is superior to the angels.
- Christ is not an angel. He is God's Son.
- To prove this, the author uses seven passages of Scripture to illustrate his point.

JESUS IS SUPERIOR TO THE ANGELS IN REGARD TO HIS RELATIONSHIP (1:4-7).

- ***Quotation # 1 (Ps. 2:7). “I will declare the decree: The Lord has said to Me, ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.’”***
 - Psalmist describes the coronation of a king.
 - Hebrews uses it to describe Jesus’s royal dignity in and through his resurrection and ascension.
 - Paul uses it in a similar fashion in Acts 13:33.
- ***Quotation # 2 (2 Sam. 7:14). 14 I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men.”***
 - Prophet Nathan tells David that he is God’s child, promising a future temple to be build by Solomon.
 - Hebrews connects this with the prophets’ understanding that this would be fulfilled in the Branch (i.e., Messiah).
 - The author connects this to Jesus. Brilliant!!!

JESUS IS SUPERIOR TO THE ANGELS IN REGARD TO HIS RELATIONSHIP (1:4-7).

- *Quotation # 3 (Ps. 97:7; LXX Deut. 32:43). 7 Let all be put to shame who serve carved images, Who boast of idols. Worship Him, all you gods.”*
 - Call to worship God alone.
 - Hebrews uses it to show that only the Triune God deserves worship, which includes Jesus, and not angels.
- *Quotation # 4 (Ps. 104:4). “Who makes His angels spirits, His ministers a flame of fire.”*
 - Angels compared to wind and fire, natural created things.
 - Christ deserves worship, and not angels.

Application

Some groups dismiss Jesus's divine or human status. To do so is to completely miss out on how Jesus was and is.

New Age philosophies encourage the worship of angels. However, this is greatly discouraged as only God deserves worship.

JESUS IS SUPERIOR TO THE ANGELS IN REGARD TO HIS REIGN (1:8-14).

8 But to the Son He says: "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom.

9 You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions."

10 And: "You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands.

11 They will perish, but You remain; And they will all grow old like a garment;

12 Like a cloak You will fold them up, And they will be changed. But You are the same, And Your years will not fail."

13 But to which of the angels has He ever said: "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool"?

14 Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?

JESUS IS SUPERIOR TO THE ANGELS IN REGARD TO HIS REIGN (1:8-14).

- Jesus is greater than the angels because of his reign.
- *Quotation # 5 (Ps. 45:6-7). 6 Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. 7 You love righteousness and hate wickedness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions.*
 - Psalm discusses a royal wedding, here it is used to describe three things about Christ.
 - 1) Son has a throne because he is a ruler.
 - 2) Son has a reign that lasts forever.
 - 3) Son loves righteousness to the delight of the Father.

JESUS IS SUPERIOR TO THE ANGELS IN REGARD TO HIS REIGN (1:8-14).

- ***Quotation # 6 (Ps. 102:25-27). 25 Of old You laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. 26 They will perish, but You will endure; Yes, they will all grow old like a garment; Like a cloak You will change them, And they will be changed. 27 But You are the same, and Your years will have no end.***
 - Longest quotation of the seven.
 - Describes how everything in creation will come to an end, but not Christ and his reign.
 - Christ will change creation like clothing to make it new.
- ***Quotation # 7 (Ps. 110:1). 1 The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.”***
 - NT writers unanimously accept this psalm as messianic.
 - What angel is this referencing? None. Only Christ.
 - Angels are “ministering spirits” serving God and helping God’s children.

Application

We focus on material things, but they will decay. Focus on the eternal things that really matter.

Many tv shows depict Jesus as an angel or a human who obtained divine status. This does not hold to Scripture. Jesus is 100 % God and 100 % man. To lose either is to lose Jesus.

Discussion

- *Based on what you have learned tonight, how would you describe Jesus to an unbeliever?*

Discussion

- *What does it mean that we are living in the last days? How should this affect your life?*

Final Applications

- God spoke through the prophets and writers of the OT, but the final revelation came through Jesus, God's Son.
- Jesus is God incarnate. You cannot separate Jesus from either his human or his divine side. To do so is to lose the true Jesus.
- Angels are wonderful beings sent to help us and to serve God. While we should respect them, we should never worship them. Only God deserves worship.
- Focus your attention to Jesus and the eternal things and place less value on those things that will perish.

Next Study:

Should You
Listen to Jesus?
Why His Words
Matter
(Hebrews 2:1-
18)

For because
HE HIMSELF
has suffered when
TEMPTED,
HE IS ABLE TO HELP
those who are being
TEMPTED.

HEBREWS 2:18