



GRACE

REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCH

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THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

Sermon Notes

The Superiority of the Son, Part III

Hebrews 1:10-14

February 1, 2009

- ❖ Among theologians and biblical scholars, it is common, when speaking of the nature, characteristics, and attributes of God, to do so in terms of what are often referred to as communicable and incommunicable attributes.
- ❖ Communicable attributes are those that God *communicates*, or gives, to people to exercise. These are attributes like love, patience, and mercy.
- ❖ However, incommunicable attributes are those that God retains for Himself and does not communicate to people. These are those attributes that define who God is in His nature. They are attributes such as eternity, self-sufficiency, holiness, and immutability (unchangeableness). God does not communicate these because He alone is God and He alone possesses these attributes.
- ❖ As we, then, begin to look at the last remaining verses of Hebrews 1, notice that the incommunicable attributes spoken of here are done so all in reference to Jesus Christ.
- ❖ Consequently, there appears to be no question that the author of Hebrews is convinced of the full deity of Jesus Christ:

- I. **The Son is Creator**
- II. **The Son is Eternal**
- III. **The Son is Immutable**
- IV. **The Son is Sovereign**
- V. **The Son is Savior**

- I. **The Son is Creator**

“¹⁰ And,
‘You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning,
and the heavens are the works of your hands;

- The next three Verses (vv. 10-12) are quoted from **Psalm 102:25-27**.
- Yet, one of the fascinating aspects of this truth is that nowhere does Psalm 102 ever refer, explicitly or implicitly, to the Son. Moreover, the focus of the Psalm is on Yahweh, the covenant God of Israel. Therefore, most Christians today would find it difficult to attribute this Psalm, apart from this direct reference in Hebrews 1, to Jesus Christ. Yet, when one understands that **all** of the Old Testament points to, and finds its fulfillment in, Christ, then it comes as no surprise that that even Psalm 102 was always intended to be read *Messianically*. In other words, Christ’s deity – that He is FULLY God, equal in His essence with the Father – is powerfully affirmed by the author’s use of Psalm 102 in the context of the Son’s activities.
- Notice the words of the author, here, as he echoes a common phrase throughout Scripture: “...**in the beginning...**”
 - The words parallel **Genesis 1:1**: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” And **John 1:1**: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God.”
 - The point in these Verses is the same as the point of Hebrews 1:10: Jesus Christ is the Creator. As the agent of Creation, Jesus Christ is separate and distinct from creation. He is holy, and the Creator of ALL things.
 - Notice as well, the verbiage of Psalm 102, that the heavens are the “work of your hands...”
 - In other words, **there is a direct, intimate involvement of Christ with His Creation**. And as we will see in a moment, after the Fall, Christ did not simply abandoned His Creation either.
 - Unlike the Deist, who believes God simply set the world in motion and then stepped back, Jesus Christ directly created everything by the power of His hands. As such, He is both transcendent and immanent with respect to His Creation.

II. The Son is Eternal

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.”**

- ❑ Notice, here, in this part of Psalm 102, that the Psalmist, and also the author of Hebrews, compares the **Creation** to the **Creator**.
- ❑ According to Donald Guthrie: “There was a widespread belief in the Greco-Roman world that the world and indeed the universe was indestructible.”
 - Yet, biblically, matter, and this material cosmos is not eternal, but had a beginning in Creation.
- ❑ However, the Creation will perish; but, the Creator will remain. The Creation will all wear out like a garment, like a robe the Creator will roll the Creation up, like a garment the Creation will be changed.
 - The Creation is compared to clothing that gets old and worn and is eventually replaced with newer garments.
 - So it is with the Creation. It will get old and will wear out. However, even though the Creation will change and grow old; the Creator will remain the same, never changing.
 - This truth is comparable to other passages in the New and Old Testaments:

1 Corinthians 7:31: “...the present form of this world is passing away.”

2 Peter 3:10: “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.”

- ❑ Therefore, at His Second Coming, Jesus Christ, the *firstborn (prototokos)* of all Creation, and the *firstfruits* and Head of the New Creation will *recreate* the heavens and the earth in such a way that they will never “wear out” or “grow old.” It will truly be a New Heaven and New Earth.

III. The Son is Immutable

¹² **But you are the same,
And your years will have no end.”**

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- ❑ Next, the Psalmist speaks to the immutability of God, and the writer of Hebrews attributes this to Jesus Christ.
- ❑ This attribute of God may be the most difficult (even more so than Sovereignty) for many professing Christians to embrace. The reason is because the thought of God “being in

control,” at least upon initial thought, is quite comforting to most of us (especially during difficult times). However, the thought of us as human beings living with absolutely no ability to change the mind of God terrifies many, if not most Christians. Ultimately, we want God to be “in control” until we feel as though we have a better perspective or insight in a particular situation than He. It is at these times that we believe it is only right for God to listen to us, and then act in accordance with our most reasonable requests.

- ❑ Yet, according to the testimony of Scripture, God has never, nor will ever change. And the same is true for our Lord Jesus Christ, for as the Second Person of the Trinity, He, too, is fully God.

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- ❑ At this point it is helpful to understand the original context of Psalm 102, historically and biblically.
- ❑ Consider the Subtitle of the Psalm: A PRAYER OF ONE AFFLICTED WHEN HE IS FAINT AND POURS OUT HIS COMPLAINT BEFORE THE LORD.
- ❑ Consider, as well, the words of the Psalmist, in the first ten verses.
- ❑ Read **Psalm 102:1-10**.
- ❑ The Psalmist is contemplating and lamenting his own finitude, mortality, mutability, and loneliness. All of this, according to the Psalmist, is “because of your indignation and anger...” In other words, man’s **sinfulness** is the cause of the Psalmist’s misery.
- ❑ No doubt, each one of us can relate to the Psalmist’s perspective, as we ponder the fleeting nature of life on this earth, and the fact that nothing ever stays “new” forever – **Verse 11**: “My days are like an evening shadow; I wither away like grass.”

<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Historically, the Psalmist is likely contemplating the misery of Zion in light of the devastation caused by the Babylonian defeat of Jerusalem and the subsequent captivity of God’s people. He is well aware that the bitter defeat of Jerusalem by its Babylonian enemies is a result of God’s judgment upon their sin.

- ❑ But, then, in Verse 12 there is a dramatic shift in the overall tone of the Psalm:
“But you, O LORD, are enthroned forever...but you are the same, and your years have no end.”

<p>So, whereas the life of man is sinful, fleeting, and full of misery, God, by contrast, is unchangeable, righteous, constant, and eternal! It is in this truth of God’s nature that the Psalmist takes comfort.</p>

- ❑ Yet, consider further the truth further that Psalm 102 speaks of Christ (for the Hebrews author, here, makes that clear). If this is true (which it must be), then, as Richard Phillips comments: “*He* (Christ) is the afflicted man pouring out his lament before his Father. It is *his* voice, as he faces and then takes up the cross, that we hear crying out, ‘For my days

pass away like smoke, and my bones burn like a furnace. My heart is struck down like grass and has withered...All the day my enemies taunt me' (Psalm 102:3-4, 8). Jesus, in his humanity, knew what it was to have his days cut short, to die too young, afflicted and despised by men, and abandoned by even his friends. Crucified in shame, he died a cursed death, with all the bitterness and darkness a man can experiences."

- ❑ Taken from this perspective, the second half of the Psalm is the Father's response to the afflicted Christ: "But you, O LORD, are enthroned forever" (Psalm 102:12).
- ❑ Arthur Pink writes: "*This* was God's answer to the plaint of Christ's being 'cut off' in the midst of His days...As Man, in resurrection, He received 'life for evermore.' Do we really grasp this? For [almost two thousand] years since the Cross, men have been born, have lived, and then died. Statesmen, emperors, and kings have appeared on the scene and then passed away. But there is one glorious Man who spans the centuries, who in His own humanity bridges those [two millennia]. He has not died, nor even grown old: He is 'the same yesterday, and today, and forever!'" [Hebrews 13:8]
- ❑ Indeed, Psalm 102 is a beautiful picture of the exaltation (through the resurrection and ascension) of Jesus Christ.
- ❑ Then, immediately, **the author of Hebrews quotes from Psalm 110:1**.

IV. The Son is Sovereign

- ❑ Psalm 110 is the most quoted Psalm in all of the New Testament.
- ❑ This Psalm so beautifully reveals the sovereign rule of Christ over all of Creation.
- ❑ It is an image taken from the ancient Oriental East, where, in royal courts, kings would sit enthroned while his servants would stand, in honor and recognition of his supremacy and authority.
- ❑ And how much more is Christ's supremacy and sovereign authority to any man's!
- ❑ Furthermore, the purpose of the author of Hebrews is to, once again, underscore the supremacy of Jesus Christ to the angels.
- ❑ **Thus, the question is, "To which of the angels did God the Father ever exalt and say, 'Sit at my right hand?'"**
 - **The answer is obvious: NONE!**
 - In fact, in the presence of God, nowhere in Scripture do we see the angels ever *sitting*. They are always worshipping, prostrate, humbled.
 - Donald Guthrie writes:

“At no time are angels ever conceived of as sitting, and therefore the enthronement of Jesus at once establishes his superiority. Not only is his sovereignty stressed, but also his absolute power over his enemies... The angels, on the other hand, are committed to constant service and will never be enthroned.”

- But, the full quote states, “Sit at my right hand / until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet?”
 - Once again, the Psalmist, and consequently the Hebrews writer, is borrowing from an ancient example.
 - In the Ancient Near East, a victorious military commander, in a vivid demonstration of the conqueror and the conquered, would often place his foot on the throat of a defeated foe.
 - Recall Joshua 10:24: “And when thy brought those [conquered] kings out to Joshua, Joshua summoned 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.’ Then they came near and put their feet on their necks.”

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- Consider not only the Psalmist, but the Apostle Peter in 1 Peter 3:22, who speaks of Christ when he describes the One “who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.”
- Therefore, given Psalm 10:1 and 1 Peter 3:22, and Hebrews 1:13, Jesus Christ is the conqueror of all of His enemies. Yet, the question is, “Who are His enemies?”
 - Certainly, many of His enemies are demonic (angelic), such as Satan Himself. However, the Apostle Paul, in 1 Corinthians 15:24-26, clearly describes the greatest of Christ’s enemies: death itself.

“Then comes the end, when he [Jesus Christ] delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.”

- Yet, **this truth only makes sense in light of (a) the Fall of Man in Genesis 3; and (b) the truth of the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ.**
- To understand the enemy of death (which Christ has conquered), one must go back to Genesis. In Genesis 2:17, God warns Adam that if he eats of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he “shall surely die.”
 - Consequently, after the Fall, the LORD says to Adam (in Genesis 3:17-19): “cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to

the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

- Thus, all parts of Creation are at enmity with one another. Even man with the ground. What the LORD is declaring, here, to Adam, is that man will need the ground in order to survive; yet, the ground will resist man (through “thorns and thistles” and refusal to give up its produce).
- **However, this struggle between man and the cursed ground will end with man’s defeat, for “...to dust you shall return.”**
- **In other words, death can properly be defined as the cursed ground swallow man up.**

“Man’s natural relationship to the ground, to rule over it, is reversed; instead of submitting to him, it resists and eventually swallows him. The earth, frustrated by the Creator’s assignment to disharmony, longs for restoration (Romans 8:20-22)...Physical death is both a judgment and a blessing. It renders all activity vain, but delivers the redeemed from earthly frustration and opens the way to an eternal salvation that outlasts the grave (Psalm 73:24; Proverbs 14:32).”

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- This tragic truth is the result of the Fall, caused by the sin of Adam, the head of the first creation.
- However, through His righteous and obedient life and death, **Christ has conquered this final enemy, death itself. And this is what makes the bodily resurrection so essential to the Christian faith!**
- **Christ was the Creator of the first Creation; yet, because of the sinful work of man, that Creation fell. Therefore, Christ, the Head of the New Creation, came into the world to *Recreate His* Creation and Restore it.**
- **The final work, then, of this restoration, was the bodily resurrection, when the Sovereign King of all Creation destroyed the ability of the cursed ground (the grave) to hold the body. That is, the cursed ground could not hold, and therefore, defeat Christ, the *firstfruits* of resurrection!**
- And after Christ defeated the final enemy, death, God exalted Him to the highest place (through the Ascension) and enthroned Him at His right hand!

V. The Son is Savior

- Consequently, since Christ defeated death – the final enemy – and is enthroned at the Father’s right hand, He alone is able to be our perfect Savior!

- So, the author of Hebrews closes this line of argumentation (and Chapter 1) with the rhetorical question, “Are they (angels) not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?”
 - The answer, of course, is yes.
 - But, the point is that angels, although they be incredibly glorious, are simply ministering spirits, sent by Christ to serve. Angels can save no one. Only Christ can.
 - The reason Christ is able to save is because He and He alone fits the identity of the One spoken of throughout this Chapter:
 - He is the final revelation of God the Father;
 - He is the heir of all things;
 - He is the agent of Creation;
 - He is the radiance of the glory of God the Father;
 - He is the exact imprint of the nature of God the Father (He is fully God);
 - He sustains all of Creation by His word;
 - He made purification for our sins;
 - He is seated enthroned at the right hand of God the Father;
 - He is the eternal Son of God;
 - He is the firstborn of all Creation;
 - He is the One the glorious company of angels worship;
 - He is God;
 - He is the Davidic Messiah King;
 - He will rule forever!
 - He has conquered all His enemies, to include the final enemy: Death.
 - Not only this, but, as John 1:4 and 5:26 state, “In him was life...for as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the son also to have life in himself.”
 - Consequently, on Jesus Christ is *able* to save anyone, for “...there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

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 - And, notice specifically, in the English Standard Version, the last two words of this chapter, *inherit salvation*.
 - In other words, it does not say *earn salvation*, for salvation is an inheritance, a blessing, and is not something that can be earned.
 - The reason is that salvation is a gift, by grace alone, and the result of Christ’s work on behalf of all who will inherit it, through Him alone!
 - He is the final revelation of God the Father;

- He is the heir of all things;
- He is the agent of Creation;
- He is the radiance of the glory of God the Father;
- He is the exact imprint of the nature of God the Father (He is fully God);
- He sustains all of Creation by His word;
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- He is the eternal Son of God;
- He is the firstborn of all Creation;
- He is the One the glorious company of angels worship;
- He is God;
- He is the Davidic Messiah King;
- He will rule forever!

Revelation 11:15-17: “Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, ‘The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever. And the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying, ‘We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, who is and who was, for you have taken your great power and begun to reign.’”

Revelation 21:3-4: “And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.’”