

SHC Hebrews 005 -- 1:7-9
3/21/2021

Jesus is Superior to the Angels
Being King of the Kingdom of God and Husband of the Church

Introduction

Seeking to **encourage** 1st Century Christians in their faith in Jesus amidst active and intentional **discouragement** of that faith, the writer to the Hebrews sets Jesus before his readers as "Son", the full and final expression of God to His people, and as superior to the prophets (1:1-3) and the angels (1:4- 2:18); in that He has become "as much better than the angels,

as He has inherited a more excellent name than they"

He is the begotten Son of God the Father (1:5), begotten by means of His resurrection from the dead which lead to His exaltation, i.e., His ascension into heaven and His taking of His seat at the right hand of God as forever reigning king of the promised kingdom of God (KOG). He is also the "firstborn" of God summing up in Himself all God had designed for mankind as king and priest and servant... - He is the "firstborn" of God whom angels worship by God's intent...

That (the above) is looking back. The writer continues to set Jesus before His readers drawing attention to His superiority to angels in verse 7-9, really all the way through the end of chapter 2. **Why does it matter to us that Jesus is superior to the angels?**

Let's give ourselves to understanding Hebrews 1:7-9 taking note of what they say about our Lord Jesus and then pressing in further to see how the truth of who Jesus is as revealed in our passage should inform our minds and transform our being such that Christ Himself is formed in us and the life we live is increasingly the life of Christ Jesus in us.

Read Hebrews 1:1-9, and repeat...

- 7 And **of the angels** He says,
 "Who makes His angels winds,
 And His ministers a flame of fire."
- 8 But **of the Son** He says,
 "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever,
 And the righteous scepter is the scepter of His kingdom.
- 9 "You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness;
 Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You
 With the oil of gladness above Your companions."

The writer of this passage contrasts "angels" (v.7 citing Psalm 104) to "the Son" (vv. 8-9 citing Psalm 45)

The Angels

Pretty darn amazing creatures with awesome power. In fact we read of some angels in our NT devotional readings this last week... Angel Gabriel incited fear in Zecharias (Luke 1:11-20) and the shepherds (2:8-14)

Psalm 104:4

Note: angels serve the purposes of God

As the Lord used wind to accomplish His judgements as with the bringing in and sending out of locusts (Exodus 10) and His deliverance of His people across the Red Sea (Ex 14) His provision of quail for meat (Numbers 11:31)...; **and as the Lord similarly used fire** in His judgement of S&G (Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven,) (Gen 19:24), and appeared to Moses in a burning bush (The angel of the Lord appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed.) (Exodus 3:2)... **so He also employs angels to accomplish His purposes**, see even Psalm 103 (**20** Bless the Lord, you His angels, Mighty in strength, who perform His word, Obeying the voice of His word!)

Trans. -- Now in contrast...vv.8-9, "But of the Son..."

The Son

The Son = Jesus is superior even to the amazing angels: He is "the Son" of God, the one angels worship as the "firstborn" (6), and in our passage most clearly, He is "The King."

Psalm 45

Speaks of a king on the occasion of his wedding/marriage. Though the psalm may have had one or more first generation kings of Israel in mind, it came to be regarded by the Hebrews of Jesus day as Messianic, speaking most ultimately of the most ultimate Messianic King, who we know to be Jesus, our Lord.

Cite and introduce Spurgeon and an online resource to get at his insights on Psalms.

<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/treasury-of-david/>

"For the sons of Korah. Special singers are appointed for so divine a hymn. King Jesus deserves to be praised not with random, ranting ravings, but with the sweetest and most skilful music of the best trained choristers."

"Maschil, an instructive ode, not an idle lay, or a romancing ballad, but a Psalm of holy teaching, didactic and doctrinal. This proves that it is to be spiritually understood. Blessed are the people who know the meaning of its joyful sound."

"Some here see Solomon and Pharaoh's daughter only -- they are short sighted; others see both Solomon and Christ -- they are cross eyed; **well focused spiritual eyes see here Jesus only, or if Solomon be present at all, it must be like those hazy shadows of by passers which cross the face of the camera, and therefore are dimly traceable upon a photographic landscape.**

"The King," the God whose throne is for ever and ever, is no mere mortal and his everlasting dominion is not bounded by Lebanon and Egypt's river. This is no wedding song of earthly nuptials, but an Epithalamium [epəTHə'lāmēəm] for the Heavenly Bridegroom and his elect spouse."

"Verse 6. Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever. To whom can this be spoken but our Lord? The psalmist cannot restrain his adoration. His enlightened eye sees in the royal Husband of the church, God, God to be adored, God reigning, God reigning everlastingly. Blessed sight! Blind are the eyes that cannot see God in Christ Jesus! We never appreciate the tender condescension of our King in becoming one flesh with his church, and placing her at his right hand, until we have fully rejoiced in his essential glory and deity. What a mercy for us that our Saviour is God, for who but a God could execute the work of salvation? What a glad thing it is that he reigns on a throne which will never pass away, for we need both sovereign grace and eternal love to secure our happiness. Could Jesus cease to reign we should cease to be blessed, and were he not God, and therefore eternal, this must be the case. No throne can endure for ever, but that on which God himself sitteth. **The sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.** He is the lawful monarch of all things that be. His rule is founded in right, its law is right, its result is right. Our King is no usurper and no oppressor. Even when he shall break his enemies with a rod of iron, he will do no man wrong; his vengeance and his grace are both in conformity with justice. Hence we trust him without suspicion; he cannot err; no affliction is too severe, for he sends it; no judgment too harsh, for he ordains it. O blessed hands of Jesus! the reigning power is safe with you. All the just rejoice in the government of the King who reigns in righteousness."

"Verse 7. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness. Christ Jesus is not neutral in the great contest between right and wrong: as warmly as he loves the one he abhors the other. What qualifications for a sovereign! what grounds of confidence for a people! The whole of our Lord's life on earth proved the truth of these words; his death to put away sin and bring in the reign of righteousness, sealed the fact beyond all question; his providence by which he rules from his mediatorial throne, when rightly understood, reveals the same; and his final assize [court] will proclaim it before all worlds. We should imitate him both in his love and hate; they are both needful to complete a righteous character.

Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. Jesus as Mediator owned God as his God, to whom, being found in fashion as a man, he became obedient. On account of our Lord's perfect life he is now rewarded with superior joy. Others there are to whom grace has given a sacred fellowship with him, but by their universal consent and his own merit, he is prince among them, the gladdest of all because the cause of all their gladness. At Oriental feasts oil was poured on the heads of distinguished and very welcome guests; God himself anoints the man Christ Jesus, as he sits at the heavenly feasts, anoints him as a reward for his work, with higher and fuller joy than any else can know; thus is the Son of man honoured and rewarded for all his pains. Observe the indisputable testimony to Messiah's Deity in verse six, and

to his manhood in the present verse. Of whom could this be written but of Jesus of Nazareth? Our Christ is our Elohim. Jesus is God with us.”

The Contrast

The angels serve as the means to the end God employs to accomplish His purposes with man (and through man to the rest of creation);

BUT

THE SON IS HIMSELF THE END [Goal/Destination/Terminus] OF GOD’S PURPOSES FOR MAN, and it is also true (secondarily) that in and through Him God’s purposes come to us. In vv 8-9 Jesus is held before us as King, i.e., the Lord served by the angels.

So

Jesus, like the angels, does serve to bring about the purposes of God (Mk 10:45), i.e., He is, in one sense, God’s means to His end; but **Jesus, unlike the angels is more than an instrument/means in God’s hands who God sends to bring about His purposes, He Himself is the goal, the end, the purpose of God for mankind.**

He is not merely or primarily utilitarian serving God’s purposes; rather He is personal, being Himself God the Son and God’s purpose.

We find our forgiveness, salvation, redemption, reconciliation, justification... not only as the result of what God has done by means of Jesus, but we find our new forgiven, saved, redeemed, reconciled, justified... life **IN the person of Jesus, the Son Himself.**

God’s goal for us is not for us to be morally good, as that is most commonly understood. **God’s goal for us is to come into a new life that is a sharing in Jesus’ resurrection life.** We come into God’s goal only as we come into relationship with the person of Jesus Himself.

I guess it is fair to say that Jesus is the means to the end of all God intends for us **AND EVEN MORE, HE IS THAT END HIMSELF.**

As we read the OT Scriptures we encounter God deploying angels to accomplish His purposes, they are quite something, fearful creatures with great powers... But they are not of the same authority/privilege/position/rank/greatness/status as Jesus, the Son who not only serves God’s purposes, but is Himself God’s purpose for man and of particular focus here is Himself **The King and Lord of all.**

In Jesus we see True Man, i.e., man according to God’s highest design for Him. And here, what the writer is setting before us, is **Jesus as the King** -- the ultimate and final and highest and forever king of the kingdom above all others, the KOG.

ILLUS. -- Military: an angel could be likened to a captain in relation to their general. Kingdom: angels are like generals to the king. Ancient Family: angels are like tutors to the children of their masters... they serve someone greater than themselves.

The writer to the Hebrews says later in 1:14 that they are, “...ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation.”

Point of the Passage

Writer to Readers: Don't be dissuaded from believing in Jesus as the Messiah promised in all the Scriptures, rather be persuaded that He is that Messiah, even the King of the KOG promised in all the Scriptures and celebrated in Psalm 45. Be thankful that God has given you eyes to recognize in Jesus the One promised in all the Scriptures. Don't flee from Him, run towards Him, stay with Him, ½ step back so as to follow, intimately close so that you can hear His every word and receive His every touch.

Reread Hebrews 1:1-9

Truth Concerning Jesus in the Passage

In this case, since the writer's topic is Jesus, the Point of the passage = the Truth concerning Jesus. **Jesus is the promised King of the KOG who now and forever sits "at the right hand of the Majesty on high" (3).**

Significance/Impact on First Readers and Us

For me the significance of this is that Jesus is My King and Yours; and therefore the life that I now live and that you now live is the life God intends us to live in relation to Jesus the King, our common King.

My relationship with Jesus is the defining relationship of my life. So it is for every believer. It is not simplistic, but rich and complex. I am going to talk in regards to me and you can extend it to yourself.

It calls for my obedience, as all the subjects of a king must be in subjection to their king and do as their king commands. But obedience is just a part of my relationship with Jesus my King. More dominant is the thought of who He is as the kind of king He is and what has been accomplished in the inauguration of His kingdom that has come.

This King is not just a king who demands obedience, He is a king who has become victorious over the greatest of mankind's enemies sin, death, estrangement from God... **His victory and rule means that God's purposes are now in operation**, and His purposes include our reconciliation to Him and our union with Him, our sharing in His life even His kingly life.

He is a king who does not just tell His subjects what to do. **He is The King who shares His life with us** and subordinates what we are to do for Him, to **who we are in Him**. **He is king of the KOG who has accomplished the purposes of God** and He has shared His life and kingly role with us giving us not only Himself but also a share in a/His mission that fills our lives with purpose beyond ourselves. Even though the angels serve Him, He came to serve us, and in Him we are to serve others seeking their eternal best.

But as convinced as I am of the reality of and the superlative wonder of goodness of Jesus being the now and forever reigning King of the KOG who has shared His kingly mission with us, I confess that **I carry a certain sadness**. It is a sadness that I have not yet been able to set down such that my hands are full and the only thing I **can** carry is the joy = "gladness" our Lord Jesus carries in fullness (Hebrews 1:9).

I am not even sure that undistracted unmitigated joy is God's will for us at this time.

Perhaps at this time, while we live (until the Lord's return) in a world still groaning, still waiting for its redemption, God would have us possess **joy of the tempered sort**, not the joy of a child who knows nothing of the problems of the world, but the joy of a parent who (knowing full well of the problems that in fact are theirs to face) is able to look both

- **further out** and higher up to God their Father and His abiding love and the hopeful future; and
- **close in** and at their own feet at the child there for whom God has caused their heart to overflow with love and affection.

A parent's joy is perhaps the joy we are to have at this time, a tempered joy.

Joy. It is a fruit of the Spirit (2nd in the Gal 5:22 list). And it should be the increasing possession of everyone sealed by the Spirit, which is all who believe in Jesus... How can we, who are aware of the problems that so often push joy out of our grasp, hold onto the joy God certainly has for us?

The answer as far as I have been able to grasp it is tied to the fact that we share in Jesus' joy, and Jesus' joy was attended by much suffering (Heb 12:2... who for the joy set before Him endured the cross...). Well, how do we share in Jesus' joy? We share in Jesus' life, not requiring it to be a life free of suffering. And how do we do that? The short answer is by faith through the Spirit. A little longer answer is that as we come to know Jesus as He is (from elsewhere, a suffering servant according to God's will), as we come to understand and have greater appreciation for all God has done in Him, the joy-stealing problems are diminished relative to the joy-producing reality that God has given us new life in union with Jesus the king and called us into His family and given us a mission perfectly fit for who we are in Him -- sons in the Son, vice-regents to the King.

Psalm 45 gives us one more image that I want to raise in your minds before we conclude. The verses cited in Hebrews 1:8-9 are Psalm 45:6-7 which highlight the fact that Jesus is God the Son and King of the forever KOG, a kingdom characterized by righteousness. Hebrews 1:9 citing Psalm 45:7 seems also to indicate that Jesus is the God-anointed King whose joy is above the joy of all His fellows/companions. He is superior to prophets and angels and His joy is superior to that of His fellows/companions who I take to be as a first referent the other Israelite kings, but who now in Christ must refer to no other than **us**.

Jesus has been anointed as King with the oil of **joy above His fellows, but we share in Him and all that is His including His joy**. What is true of Jesus is true of us in that He has shared His life with us causing us, in an admittedly mysterious way, to be joined to Him, to be one with Him as He is one with the Father.

His joy "above" our own as it is, is still our joy shared. I count His joy fully realized to be one of the possessions God has for us when the Lord comes again.

The Psalm is created and addressed to the King in regards to His marriage. The NT sees Jesus as Bridegroom, i.e., husband to the church. In a good marriage, the inevitable problems common to mankind are less likely to eclipse one's joy for the simple reason that the problems one spouse faces are the problems they face together.

There is ultimate security afforded to us as the bride of Christ, a confidence that no matter what happens, His love will continue and He will be with us. What a marvelous gift marriages can give to each other and Jesus does give to us -- the gift of never failing love and presence. He is for us and always will be. And not just out there, up there, but so close in, so intimate that the Bible describes our relationship with Jesus as that of a wife and a husband. If Jesus were your husband, ladies, many of you would readily admit that His joy would be yours. Well Jesus is our husband and His superior joy is ours, to share.

His joy is ours to share, but we don't always walk in it do we? I walk most fully in it when I am most fully aware of who I am now in Him. Who are we? Together the Church with all of its many members is His bride. When I see myself as His bride along with the other members of His church, and when I further reflect that His husbanding to me is perfect and never ending, His joy is closest at hand.

These problems seem so overwhelming, complains my spirit. I am your husband, assures the Lord. I will never leave you nor forsake you. Nothing can separate you from My love... though you walk through the valley of the shadow of death I am with you...

OK. We will face them together; and being together with You attaches Me to Your superior joy.

Let's pray.