



The Supreme Christ

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Hebrews 1:4-14

Clint Pressley

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

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”?*

⁶ And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says,

“Let all God’s angels worship him.”

⁷ Of the angels he says,

*“He 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,
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.”*

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.^[a]
But you are the same,
and your years will have no end.”*

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?*

(Pastor prays)

What does it mean to actually be a Christian in a hostile society? To joyfully embrace all the Bible says as truth and then to humbly but faithfully live that out in a day-to-day fashion. Furthermore, what does it look like to bear the reproach of Christ and be a follower of Christ in a culture of moral relativism and social anarchy? I think you and I are finding out first-hand and with the outside pressure, the internal struggle will always be to compromise: to compromise the faith that was “once and for all delivered to the Saints.”

That is why I believe this book is so important for modern-day Christians in 2022. Now, more than anytime in living memory, we are living under moral pressure to step away from Bible convictions and Christian compassion. In our rearview mirror we can see so many historical denominations that once held to a vibrant and robust biblical Christianity crash onto the dung heap of moral relativism and biblical compromise.

And Hebrews seems to be the sobering antidote that wakes us up to the excellence of the exalted Lord Jesus. It’s as if the author is red-faced, seeking to convince the church to hold tight and standfast under the lordship of Jesus. The passage before us is a bit of a polemic as the author begins his systematic display of how Jesus is greater than all and He deserves your full-throated love and allegiance and devotion and commitment.

As he starts, the preacher picks out the next lowest thing from a divine being, angelic beings. Before settling into the work of Christ, the author here is

introducing us to the person of Christ. In second temple Judaism there had arisen a fascination with angels and the author needed to re calibrate their theological understanding. Because if you don't get theology right, you can't get being a Christian right, and the big danger in elevating the status of angels is the same danger we face in elevating culture. It compromises the soul-thrilling, overwhelming superiority of Jesus!

The Supremacy of Christ Must Captivate our Hearts

We have to fight compromise by looking at Christ.

See Him as a rescuing Savior

In the course of this passage, the author in verse 11 quotes 7 Old Testament passages. He starts out with a Psalm in verses 4-5. Let's read verses 4-5.

⁴ having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. 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"?

Angels are very important in the Bible. They are mentioned 100 times in the Old Testament and 160 in the New Testament. They release prisoners. They instruct preachers. And they encourage believers. They help travelers and judge the blasphemous. But angels, as great as they are, are created beings and messengers. They told about the coming of Christ. They declared the birth of Christ. They attended to the suffering Christ. They were there at the resurrection of Christ, and now and forever they worship Christ. They surround the throne that He sits on. They are sent, and it is Christ who does the sending.

The writer says Christ has a more excellent name than the angels and then quotes Psalm 2:7. *I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you.* And if that's not enough, he appropriates a story in 2 Samuel 7:14 where Nathan is speaking to David about Solomon and says, this is pointing to Christ, he says, *I will be to him a father, and he shall be*

to me a son. Angels are messengers but Christ is the Son! The name is important because it reveals essence, and Jesus is the Son. Psalm 2:7 is vital. It's quoted at the baptism of Jesus. It's quoted at the transfiguration of Jesus and His sonship is validated at the resurrection in Acts. John tells us in John 1 that Jesus has glory, glory as the only Son from the Father. And He comes as a rescuing savior. Do you see Him as the only hope and source of strength, giving total submission to Christ? Whose name is above every name. Let's see Him as a rescuing savior.

See him as the reigning savior

The author now takes our eyes off the earth and into Heaven to see Christ as deserving our full worship. And to do that he quotes from the song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32:6. Let's read it. ⁶ *And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him."*

It is a song written about worshipping God. The word in English comes from the word "worth." Worth-ship. What is He *worth* to you? To endure, to go through, to stand under the suffering. What is He worth? Do you see the crucified, resurrected savior as reigning Lord? Is He worth any inconvenience, hardship, persecution, bankruptcy, scorn, bad job, or tough marriage? It helps to see Him living, suffering and dying in your place. And He is raised and reigning. It helps to see that He is worth whatever hardship we have. The danger is to compromise the overwhelming superiority of Christ. These people were either under threat from Nero's persecution or under threat from being ostracized by their Jewish countrymen. Compromise doesn't require an outright denial of Christ. It's only a different and lesser affirmation of Him and His greatness! It's just enough, but not too much. And as you guard against compromise we are called to see Him as a rescuing savior and a reigning savior.

See him as a sovereign savior

To display Christ and His sovereignty, the preacher here takes two more Psalms in verses 7-8 and pictures Christ as a reigning king and the angels are

His servants. ⁷ *Of the angels he says, “He 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, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom.* He has His throne of power, His scepter of holiness and His lordship of it all. Many would say that verse 8 is the most empathetic and unequivocal statement of the deity of Christ in the scriptures, because in this context in verse 8, Psalm 45 is used as the Father Himself testifying to the godhead of Christ.

And once you see the supremacy of Christ in all things, it brings your life into a terrible tension. Because so many other things and people and desires are clamoring for your time, affection, allegiance and compliance. And this preacher knows if he can just get his people to see Christ on His throne, it calms the waters, sets the priorities and strengthens their convictions. People compromise because they really don't see Jesus as Lord but as a nice pillow or a soft place to land when we fall. The supremacy of Christ must captivate our hearts. We must see Him as the rescuing savior. We must see Him as the reigning savior. We must see Him as the sovereign savior.

See Him as the redeeming savior

To display and present Christ as the Redeemer, the preacher goes to the prophets and quotes Isaiah 61 here in verse 9. Let's read it. ⁹ *You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.*” Loved righteousness and hated lawlessness, anointed with the oil of gladness, there are so many things brought together. Here is Christ, not just a righteous example but as a right substitute, living and loving to fulfill the righteousness of God.

John the Baptist baptized Him, Jesus said, to fulfill all righteousness. He hated wickedness. Remember Him agonizing in the Garden of Gethsemane, waiting for the cup to pass but willing to take it even though He would cry out to the Father, “Why have you forsaken me!?” This passage sets us once more right in front of the cross and the redemptive purchase there. In fact, the preacher will use this thought again in the most famous passage out of Hebrews which is

Hebrews 12:1-2. **12** *Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.*

The point is to see Him as the one who died on the cross, enduring the hatred of that agony but doing it for the absolute joy there is in seeing you as His people saved, redeemed, cleansed and forgiven.

See him as the victorious savior

There are two Psalms quoted here. One speaks to Christ as the unchanging Creator and the other speaks of Him as the undefeated victor. Let's look at verses 10-12 about the unchanging Creator. Here the preacher quotes Psalm 102.

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."

Christ is sitting as the creator. This whole quote is saturated with trinitarian theology: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. And Jesus is presented as the unchanging God to be known, revered, worshipped and obeyed. And the preacher ends with a crescendo of sorts with the most frequently quoted Psalm in the New Testament, Psalm 110. Let's read it in verses 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?*

Prayers have been heard, salvation completed and enemies defeated. During His earthly ministry, Christ defeated the curse of the law, sin, Satan, worldly

powers, death, Hell and the grave. And He will eventually throw death and Hell into the lake of fire. And now He sits on the throne hastening the day promised in Revelation 21:4. *⁴ 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.*” and Christ is King. The supremacy of Christ must captivate our hearts so you don’t want to compromise. We need to see Him as the rescuing savior and reigning savior. We need to see Him as the sovereign savior, redeeming savior. We need to see Him as the victorious savior. Trust Him today as Lord of all and Lord of your life.

(Pastor prays)